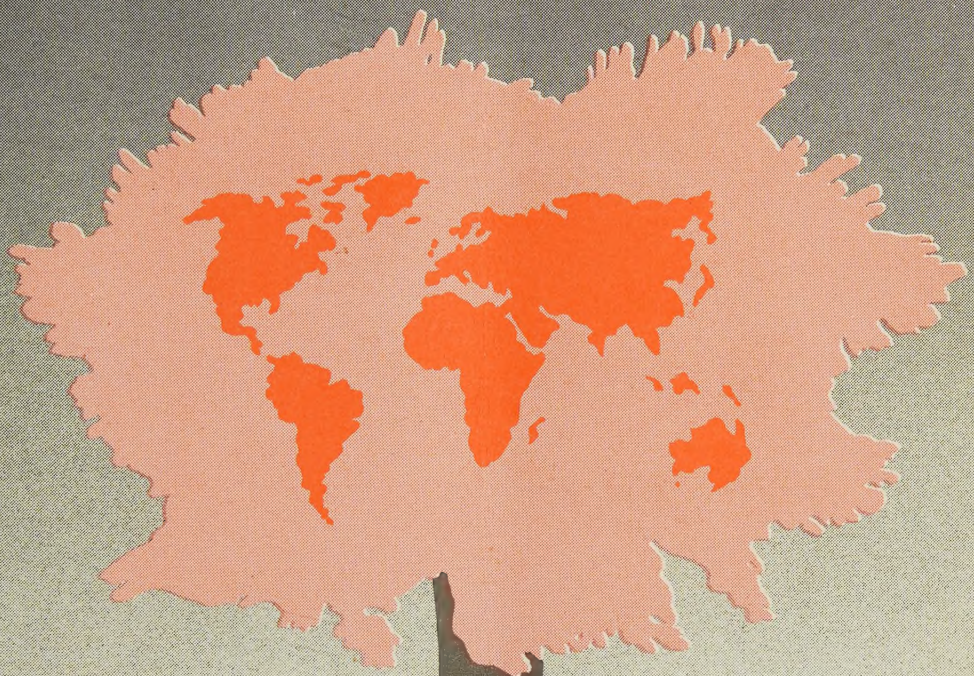
A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

IRANGATE—
THE ISRAELI CONNECTION

NEW TIMES



MAY DAY—MORE THAN A FESTIVE OCCASION

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The Pride and Peril of the Svanetian Mountains

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

In the foreword to their novel "The Little Golden Calf" Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov described a type of hard-faced individual, one of those who recognized Soviet government somewhat later than Britain and slightly earlier than Greece. For their contemporaries this satirical portrait of a conservative and bureaucrat was easily recognizable. The ironical image was prompted by history itself.

It took the Western countries no little time to grasp the obvious: Soviet government had come to stay. In the first two years after the revolution, the New York Times, for instance, reported 91 times that the Bolsheviks had fallen or were about to fall within a few days. In 1919 U.S. President Woodrow Wilson said that America must see to it that people's government should not strike root in the U.S. or anywhere else. The President acted accordingly by sending troops against the young republic. Britain and France, Japan and Germany also sent troops. However, the armed intervention met with complete failure.

Other means were also resorted to in the hope of bringing the Soviet republic to its knees. Economic sanctions, trade blockade, diplomatic isolation, political blackmail—but all to no avail. Moreover, attempts were made simply to ignore the existence of the socialist state. From the political standpoint the naiveté of such attempts became more and more patent from year to year. And from the economic standpoint—at a time when the West was in the grip of crisis—this policy was disadvantageous.

Britain was the first to sign a trade agreement with the Soviet republic. That was in 1921. Britain's example was immediately followed by many other countries. This amounted to de facto recognition. Before long it was found that it was possible, and indeed profitable, to do business with the Bolsheviks.

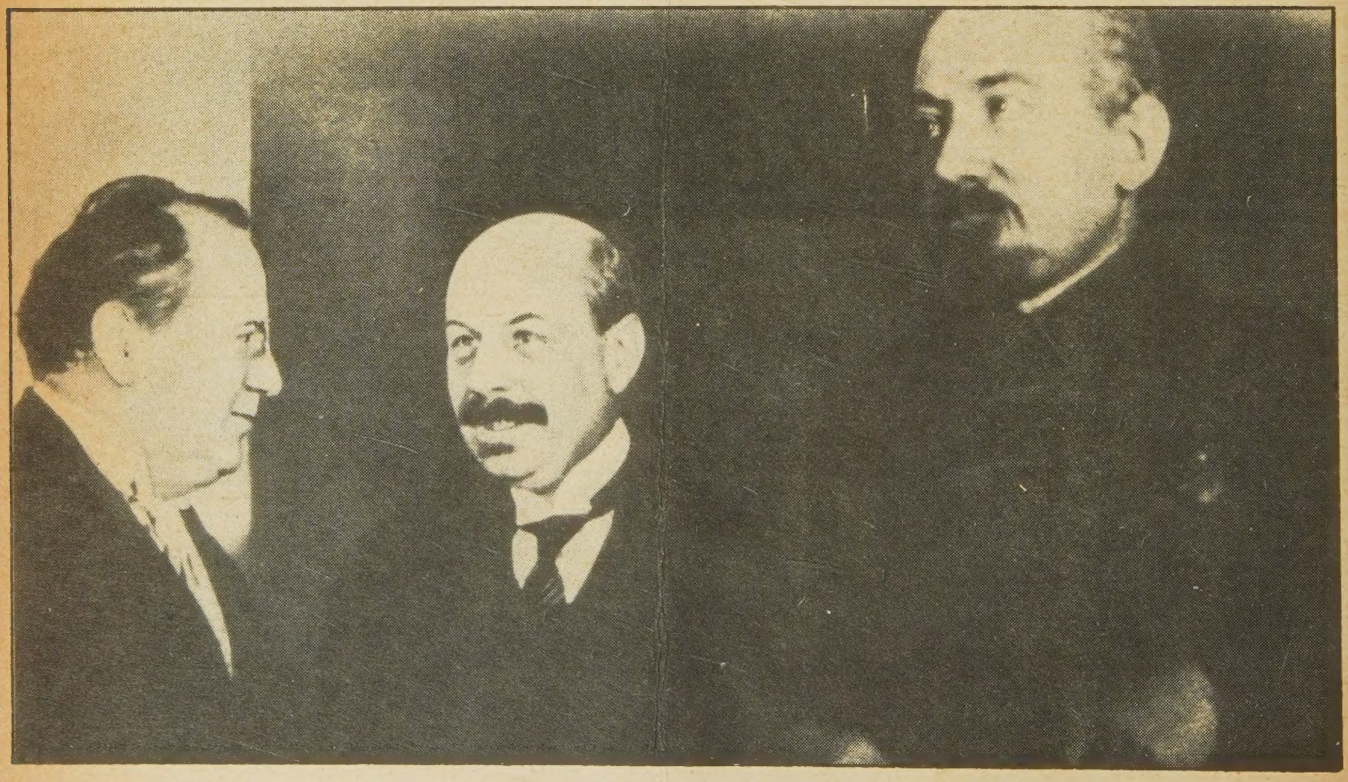
Logically the next step should have been to normalize diplomatic relations. But it took most Western countries another three years to decide to take that step. Germany alone recognized the U.S.S.R. in 1922. And in 1924 Britain and Italy, Norway and Austria, Greece and Sweden followed suit. This was evidence of the growing prestige of the Soviet Union and of the success of its diplomacy.

"Recognition rush on Chicherin's office."

Cartoon by Boris Yefimov, 1924

Mikhail Kalinin, Georgi Chicherin, and Shalva Eliava receiving the Greek envoy Mavrodis. 1924.

Georgi Chicherin and Maxim Litvinov with the first ambassador of France Jean Herbette. 1925.



A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

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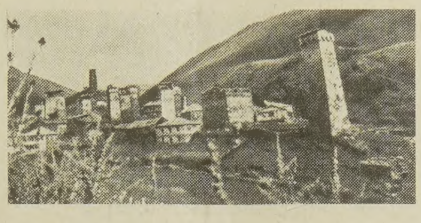

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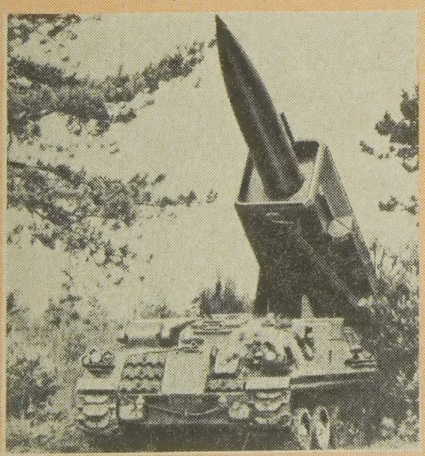

12 The French nuclear missile Pluton

FRANCE AND THE NUCLEAR GUILLOTINE

"Hands off our nuclear weapons!" the French leadership warns time and again, despite the fact that no one is encroaching on them. How has Paris received the new Soviet proposals for the dismantling of medium- and short-range missiles! Isn't it failing to keep pace with the fast-changing situation in Europe and the world!

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

We are following the new developments brought about by the 27th CPSU Congress in the U.S.S.R. with keen interest. To our great regret we have to depend for information on the capitalist press which gives its own slant to even the trickle of news that occasionally seeps through.

VICTORINO DIEGUEZ GUERRA
Soria, Spain

We, the people of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba, have had one of our most successful demonstrations, with thirty thousand people from all walks of life—among them workers, students, churchmen, representatives of political parties and the provincial government—participating. The demonstration culminated in declaring Manitoba a nuclear-free zone. People's participation in such demonstrations can be a powerful instrument for peace.

R. PLATSCHICK
Winnipeg, Canada

The anti-communist Western mass media allege that "perestroika is just a facelift."

You could counter by presenting a full picture of the development of socialist democracy. I am sure many readers would be interested to learn about the changes in your country. All of us living in the socialist world must draw upon each other's positive experience.

UDO HARTMANN
Eberswalde-Finow, G.D.R.

I thoroughly enjoyed the excerpts from Mikhail Shatrov's new play, "The Brest Peace," which appeared in issue No. 12 (1987) of your magazine. I'm sure it would give pleasure to your readers if you were to print something else by him.

D. MAXIMOV
Tallinn, U.S.S.R.

EDITORIAL

THE LESSONS OF CHERNOBYL

Many lessons can and must be drawn from the shock of Chernobyl. Soviet society is drawing them.

The technological lesson. Decisions on measures to guarantee the accident-free operation of nuclear power plants have been taken in the Soviet Union at the highest level. Equipment has been made more reliable and accident-protection systems, faster and more effective. The U.S.S.R.'s strategic policy on nuclear energy remains unchanged. According to U.S.S.R. Nuclear Energy Minister Nikolai Lukonin, in 1990 power generation at nuclear plants will be double what it was in 1985, and will have more than trebled by 1995. The U.S.S.R. is building 11 new nuclear power plants. The Chernobyl accident has not resulted in a slowdown in the development of nuclear energy in the Soviet Union. But the industry will be made as safe as possible.

The moral lesson. Openness is imperative. The information anaemia that afflicted the local authorities in the Chernobyl area gave rise to many further misfortunes. Yet another side to the problem is optimization of the "man-machine" relationship, enhancing the responsibility and discipline of the staff. What has been done on that front? Says Nikolai Lukonin: "Major changes have been made in our methods of training personnel for nuclear power plants. Upgrading of skills and additional tests, as well as a new procedure for training and retraining nuclear plant workers have been introduced." More attention is being given to the human factor in the "man-machine" relationship.

The political lesson. And the most important. According to experts, the smallest nuclear charge, when exploded, has a yield equal to three Chernobyls. This means that the explosion of even a tiny fraction of the nuclear arsenals that exist today would bring about an irreparable catastrophe. Any state that decided, after all, to deliver a first nuclear strike would doom itself to agonizing death, and not from just a retaliatory strike, but from the consequences of the explosion of its own warheads. "This is neither propaganda nor political improvisation, nor the whipping up of fears. This is reality. It is simply irresponsible to reject it, and criminal to disregard it." (Mikhail Gorbachev)

The tocsin of Chernobyl sounds as a warning of the threat hanging over our planet. The Soviet programme for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons put forward on January 15, 1986, makes it possible to eliminate this threat altogether.

Reykjavik was a breakthrough on the way to a non-nuclear future. At the summit the Soviet leader made proposals that held the promise of a real advance towards disarmament. Alas, American policy did not rise to the challenge. The West was unhappy about the "package" principle. The U.S.S.R. then proposed to remove from the package the question of nuclear weapons in Europe, to be solved immediately on the basis of earlier understandings.

This is our answer to the greatest lesson of Chernobyl. But why is the West doing nothing? After all, it was the West that panicked and exaggerated the consequences of the disaster, which were tragic enough as it was. It is hampered by a narrow, class-oriented vision, old ways of thinking, and the amoral and senseless reliance on nuclear weapons.

It will be a long time before Chernobyl is forgotten. Its warning should be heard by everyone. Safety in the nuclear age is our common problem, hence our common concern and our common responsibility.

SOCIALISM: NEW HORIZONS

VLADLEN KUZNETSOV

The socialist experiment—the first in history—on which revolutionary Russia embarked 70 years ago, was greeted with keen interest the world over. Today progressives everywhere again have their eyes trained on the country of the Great October Revolution throughout whose vast territory a profound movement for socialist renewal is taking place on a gigantic scale. This interest is not prompted by idle curiosity. It reflects awareness that the significance of Soviet reform transcends the frontiers of the U.S.S.R.

A new look

"We view the deeds of the Soviet Communists," Gustav Husak said during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Prague, "as a fundamental contribution of international significance to resolving certain theoretical and practical problems involved in socialist construction, which enhances the appeal and influence of socialism."

This is how many impartial people the world over view the current restructuring in the U.S.S.R.

The third industrial, scientific-technical and technological revolution has brought about a new situation in the historical contest between the two opposing systems. It has necessitated a profound reconsideration of all aspects of domestic and international policies of world socialism, a reappraisal of all that is obsolete and no longer answers to the imperatives and spirit of the time. It has called for a fresh look, a new style of political thinking that will bring the strategy and credo of socialism into line with the requirements of the day, release the potential of socialism and give it a new, truly modern look.

New political thinking makes it easier to discern the miscalculations that have occurred. We have often cited Lenin's thesis that socialism's main impact on international processes is a function of its economic successes, but we have failed to back it up properly with creative practice and scientific and technological innovation.

We proclaimed the advantages of socialism inherent in its nature, but were sometimes ill-equipped to make good use of them.

We have conveniently categorized negative features as "teething troubles" and virtually reconciled ourselves to them, while attributing some of our sins—also a very convenient justification—to imperialist intrigues.

We have created a basically new type of democracy, of a higher order than bourgeois democracy, with real rights and freedoms, but we have not always managed to exercise them effectively and translate them into living practice.

Thinking in terms of millions of people, we have not been attentive enough to the individual, to upholding human dignity, rights and freedoms, to actively involving the individual, all his abilities and initiatives, in the process of socialist construction.

We have also, on occasion, taken a simplistic and schematic view of the processes at work within the socialist community and in individual socialist countries.

The new political and economic situation in the world has made it necessary for the socialist community to move into a more dynamic and productive stage of development, a qualitatively new level of relations both within the community and with the external world. Mikhail Gorbachev's official friendly visit to Czechoslovakia, his Moscow talks with Wojciech Jaruzelski which resulted in a declaration on Soviet-Polish cooperation in ideology, science and culture, chart the lines for the socialist world's further advance, for perfecting the ties existing between the socialist countries. The practice of mutual relations and cooperation between the socialist countries was enriched by Yegor Ligachev's visit to Hungary, Bulgarian Prime Minister Georgi Atanasov's official friendly visit to the U.S.S.R., Victor Chebrikov's to Cuba, and the visit to Sofia by a delegation of the Moscow City Committee of the CPSU headed by Boris Yeltsin. The results of these and other meetings have demonstrated that relations with the socialist countries are a priority area in Soviet foreign policy. They are milestones in the new phase in the life of the socialist states.

What are the main distinguishing features of this phase?

First, a wide use of all the advantages of the socialist system, its socio-economic, scientific, technical, intellectual potential to keep abreast of scientific and technological progress, to raise living standards and strengthen the position and prestige of the socialist world system.

Second, the search for the most rational and effective forms and methods of socialist development, streamlining interaction in international affairs and enriching it with new forms.

Third, a highly effective use of the combined material and intellectual potential of the socialist states, all the benefits of the international socialist division of labour, the international experience of socialism, and the more progressive and promising forms of socialist economic integration and business cooperation.

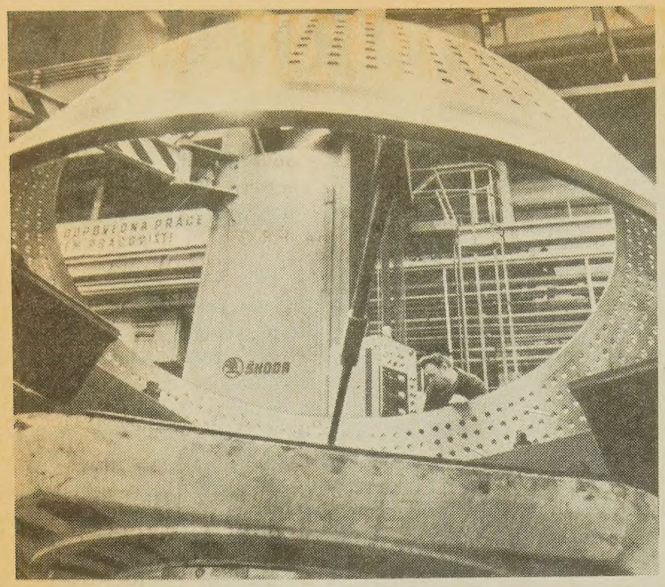
Fourth, closer and more trusting relations between the parties, governments, parliaments, state and nongovernmental organizations, direct ties between work collectives, and wide-scale direct people-to-people contacts.

Internationalist code of conduct

In his speech at a Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship rally in Prague, Mikhail Gorbachev put forward the **internationalist principles** that the CPSU intends to follow in its relations with the fraternal parties. These principles have attracted attention both within and beyond the socialist countries.

"We proceed first and foremost from the fact," the CPSU General Secretary declared, "that the whole system of political relations between the socialist countries can and must be built strictly on the basis of equality and mutual responsibility. In the socialist world no one can lay claim to a special position. The independence of each party, its responsibility before its own people, its sovereign right to make decisions concerning the development of the country—these are unconditional principles for us. At the same time, it is our profound conviction that the socialist community can achieve further successes on condition that each party and country concerns itself not only with its own, but with the common interests, shows respect for its friends and allies and takes their interests strictly into account."

Assessing this period as a turning point in relations in the socialist world, said Secretary of the CC CPSU Vadim Medvedev at the meeting with the working people of Sabirabad region, Azerbaijan S.S.R., on April 26, we have initiated, in the spirit of these principles, the process of developing new rela-



New-generation reactors developed in the Soviet Union are manufactured at the V.I. Lenin Skoda Engineering Works in Plzen, Czechoslovakia.

CTK-TASS photo

tions with the fraternal countries, a process which can also be described as restructuring.

The meetings in Prague, Moscow Budapest, Sofia and Havana stressed the importance of the **international experience** of socialism and the experience of each individual country. The wisdom to be derived from this common heritage, the active exchange of everything valuable that emerges in the socialist world—all this makes the fraternal socialist countries capable of attaining the most advanced international standards on all socio-economic, scientific, technical and technological parameters. Socialist economic cooperation and integration have truly limitless reserves and potentialities. This is not a matter of taking any one country as a model, but of all partners pooling their experience for the benefit of all.

The internationalist code of conduct of the socialist countries will provide the basis for strengthening their unity and cohesion, renewing and enhancing socialism, and bringing it to greater maturity, a maturity reflected, for example, in the declaration on Soviet-Polish cooperation in ideology, science and culture. This remarkable trailblazing document has been prompted by the common desire to accelerate social and economic progress, develop socialist civilization and its culture, mould a socialist way of life, and ensure lasting peace for the present and coming generations. The two countries are pooling their efforts to give greater dynamism to the socialist system, and to make it more open to all that is progressive. The aim is to remove the barriers that prevent individuals achieving creative self-realization and provide the conditions for each citizen to apply the whole wealth of his or her individual abilities and talents. The aim is actively to disseminate and promote new political thinking, overcome national egocentricity, self-admiration, conservatism, inertia and dogmatism in the social sciences.

The document is imbued with a spirit of responsibility for the future of world socialism; it displays a fearless and vigorous approach to problems whose solution has for various reasons been delayed and made difficult, to doing away with the "blanks" of short and long standing. "Let us not leave unsolved problems to our children and grandchildren," says the document. This appeal is profoundly significant.

The salvation of the world

Socialism puts itself at the service not only of the nations constituting the socialist community proper, but of the whole world, and promotes international security. For it does not consider itself and its destiny apart from the rest of mankind, but as an element of a single and indivisible world. Socialism intends to contribute still more towards humanizing international relations, creating a just economic and information order, solving the global problems of mankind, and ridding people of the fear of war and the burden of militarism.

Historically, reason has always had pride of place on the scale of values. In the nuclear age, a political thinking that puts peace and disarmament above all other strategic considerations and rejects nuclear madness is worth a hundred times more. Only this new thinking can bring all countries to adopt urgent measures to prevent the nuclear holocaust that threatens to annihilate mankind.

There was a time when the bourgeoisie referred to its victory over feudalism as the advent of the reign of reason. But here is what Engels had to say on the crisis of the Age of Enlightenment ideals: "The state based upon reason completely collapsed... The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest." This war continues to this day—think of the series of undeclared wars that have become part of the strategy and practice of imperialism today. All the more important is the fact that the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries are advocating an international code of conduct characteristic of real states of reason.

It is reason that bids us exhibit the maximum good will and readiness to make rational compromises. Reason is the source of the dynamism and active foreign policy stance of the Warsaw Treaty states. Each of them, separately and together, have put forward many constructive initiatives. The governments of the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia have proposed to the government of the F.R.G. that a nuclear-free corridor be created in Central Europe. In backing this proposal, the Soviet Union has said it is ready to safeguard and respect the nuclear-free status of such a zone. Promising ideas on making the Balkans a nuclear and chemical weapon-free zone have been put forward by Bulgaria, and Romania, as well as Greece. Poland has come up with valuable suggestions for confidence-building measures in Europe.

In recent months, the Warsaw Treaty countries have jointly developed and proposed peace initiatives. The Budapest appeal to reduce armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe was followed by a joint motion in the U.N. on the creation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. Proposals have been made on nuclear-free zones in Europe and on banning chemical weapons. In April 1987 a new joint action was launched when the Warsaw Treaty states called on the NATO countries to declare a mutual 1-2-year moratorium on increasing military spending by the states belonging to the two alliances.

Today the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries propose to tackle a truly historic task—ridding Europe of nuclear arsenals, of all types of missiles. This would be a prelude to a nuclear-free world, and go a long way towards preventing a nuclear holocaust.

At the present juncture, socialism's international policy is characterized by a creative, profoundly innovative and at the same time rational approach to world affairs, a dynamic and imaginative search for ever new opportunities of creating a less armed and safer world. Socialism is putting its class interests second to the universal human consideration of the survival of civilization. It is this that is winning it growing prestige in the eyes of world public opinion. As it eliminates negative phenomena and embarks on renewal, socialism, aware of its responsibility for the future of the world, is becoming a true standard-bearer for social progress and social justice, democracy and humanism, and the guarantor of international stability and security.

■

JOBS FOR ALL IN A WORLD WITHOUT WARS

Such is the demand being made by participants in working people's mass actions worldwide this spring. In capitalist countries the fight against unemployment and the arbitrary rule of big business is inseparable from the struggle for peace and the survival of mankind. Class solidarity is vital to the success of the struggle.

● F.R.G.

The voice of Ruhr

"All my family and myself are connected with the Thyssen concern. I've been working at a Thyssen plant uninterruptedly for 38 years, since the age of 15. My children have also gone to work there. My daughter works in a laboratory, and my son is training to be an electrician. But what does the future have in store for us? Thyssen and other steel concerns are cutting short production."

I interviewed Werner Wruck in the crowded Dellplatz in the very centre of Duisburg. The square is a traditional rallying point for participants in the Ruhr Easter March. After a meeting, a column of demonstrators set out on a three-day march to Dortmund by way of Oberhausen, Essen and Bochum. In Dortmund, marchers from Eastern Westphalia and Münsterland joined them for a concluding meeting.

A few days before the Easter marches, 25,000 people gathered in Duisburg to protest against the impending dismissal of 2,000 workers from the local Krupp plant. Altogether, the steel industry bosses plan to kill at least 40,000 jobs in the next two years, in the Ruhr area for the most part. Furthermore, several mines are to be closed, at a time when unemployment in Ruhr is already running at 20 per cent. The closure of steel plants and mines will touch off a chain reaction of redundancies in the supply and service industries.

"We are asking the government to suspend mass layoffs in the metallurgical and coal mining industries for two years," said Werner Wruck. "Since cutbacks in coal and steel output appear inevitable, jobs in other industries will have to be created over this period. Shorter working weeks might relieve the situation somewhat. This is what we are going to say today. But Easter marches are above all peace marches. Therefore in our slogans we are combining demands for job security with demands for disarmament."

Werner pointed to a streamer his comrades were holding. "Zero option for missiles, not for steel and coal" it read.

"The Soviet Union's suggestion that Euromissiles be dismantled on both sides has given us hope that the Pershings and Tomahawks will disappear here," Wruck went on. "However, we are afraid the Americans and the F.R.G. government will find a pretext for keeping the missiles."

Werner Wruck's views are shared by many in the F.R.G. In a poll by the magazine Stern on Moscow's proposal to withdraw medium-range missiles from Europe, 54 per cent of all those questioned said they thought it very good, 38 per cent good, and only one per cent bad. Asked who, in their opinion, was more eager to safeguard peace and achieve disarmament, 49 per cent of the respondents named Gorbachev and nine—Reagan.

Another marcher, Klaus Peter, a member of the organization Sportswomen and Sportsmen for Peace, Against Nuclear Missiles, told me the public should pressurize the government into accepting the zero option without any preconditions or reservations.

"We have already held two large sports festivals in Dortmund, drawing tens of thousands of spectators," he said. "Our demands are: get the American missiles out, cancel the agreement on our country's participation in SDI, end nuclear tests. Now we are preparing a big relay race for peace to take place between June 12 and 28. The idea is to get as many people as possible involved in the peace movement."

In the Dellplatz, a New Times correspondent interviewed Ellen Weber, Deputy Chairman of the German Communist Party.

"Peace marches, which are a long-standing tradition, have greatly contributed to the formation of the peace movement in our country," she said. "They are of special importance this year. We want to rally support for the Soviet proposals for nuclear disarmament and especially for the withdrawal of medium-range missiles from Europe. Every effort must be made to get the zero option agreement signed before this year is out.

"We Communists," she went on, "always point out the interconnection between the peace campaign and the fight to improve the workingman's position. Real disarmament will release enormous resources to be spent on the creation of new jobs, housing construction and environmental protection."

On the eve of the march I chanced to hear a radio commentator say the peace movement had outlived itself. He proved wrong. Meetings like the one I saw in Duisburg's Dellplatz were held in dozens of other F.R.G. cities. At a very conservative estimate, at least 300,000 people took part in the Easter

● CHILE

The whole nation demands jobs, justice and freedom.

marches, which were supported by the Federation of German Trade Unions, the Social Democrats, the Greens, the Communists and numerous anti-war organizations. True, the Christian Democratic Union struck a discordant note by alleging that the marches only served "to fan anti-American feeling," but many followers of the ruling parties joined the marches nonetheless.

The Easter marches marked the start of a succession of massive actions by the peace movement. A symbolic blockade of the Mutlangen Pershing base from May 1 to 9 is to be followed by one at the cruise missile base in Hasselbach (May 28-29). A national demonstration of peace campaigners is scheduled to take place in Bonn on June 13. "We are again demanding," reads an address issued by the coordinating peace committee, "that the Bundestag revoke its missile decision. Pershing 2s and cruise missiles must be scrapped. Other nuclear weapons must also be eliminated. All Europe should become a nuclear-free zone."

ALEXANDER TOLPEGIN
our own correspondent
Duisburg—Bonn

● **BELGIUM**

The lesson of a strike

Belgium has been living under a regime of "austerity" for over five years. The trade unions say that the buying power of wage labour has dropped by about 15 per cent over that period, while the net profits of industry have doubled. Belgians are also unhappy about the high unemployment rate, with half a million out of work.

Socio-economic conflicts have become chronic in such circumstances. One strike follows another, called now by the metalworkers, then by miners. Transport workers, teachers, post office personnel and power workers strike in quick succession. However, there are few victories.

One example is the strike at a non-ferrous metalworks in a Liège suburb. The strikers described the conflict as follows.

Jean-Pierre. The story goes back to last spring. On May 31, 1986, many of my fellow workers and I took part in a demonstration against another package of "austerity measures" proposed by the government. On June 3 we staged a 24-hour sit-in at our works. When we came to work next day, the gate was closed: the proprietors had gone onto the counterattack and announced a lockout. The works stood idle for almost a fortnight and the managers refused to pay us for that period.

In late September, a rolling mill broke down and we could not repair it during the regular shift. The repairmen sought advice from their trade union leaders, Armando Zambon and Michel Trine, and refused to work overtime. In retaliation, the managers dismissed the trade unionists, and we called a strike on October 3.

Luc. Under Belgian legislation, trade unionists cannot be dismissed for their activities. But this is theory, whereas in practice recalcitrant labour leaders are sacked fairly frequently: the proprietors use a legal loophole allowing them to dismiss an employee for a "serious offence."

Jacques. The management took the union activists to court. The Belgian General Federation of Labour, to which more than 80 per cent of the work force at our plant belong, decided to come to their aid. Such cases take a long time and all these delays are a powerful lever in the hands of the employers as the finances of the workers and their unions are limited. But this was not their only lever. Throughout the four months of our strike, the management and its supporters in the political and financial communities used every form of blackmail and intimidation. The managers demanded, for instance, that

● **JAPAN**

The economic policy pursued by Nakasone's conservative government is evoking growing discontent.

● **SPAIN**

Police break up a student demonstration demanding a democratic system of education.

TASS photos

the court ban pickets and threatened to film our "acts of terrorism." Pickets, the managers' lawyers claimed, are a violation of democracy because they deny the willing a chance to work. In reply to these claims, we called a vote and the overwhelming majority of our blue and white collar workers opted for continued action.

André. In late December the court ruled that the proprietors were in the wrong. Zambon and Trine were to have their jobs back. In Belgium, however, such court rulings are not binding and the proprietors have the final say. They refused pointblank to give back the "rebels" their jobs. Moreover, the stockholders of our enterprise, headed by the Société Generale de Belgique, the strongest financial and industrial corporation in the country, decided to use our action to teach the workers a lesson and cut the unions down to size. They declared the works bankrupt and in late March the court endorsed the move. We were all made redundant....

What conclusions are prompted by this defeat for labour?

"The workers at the plant cannot be blamed: they defended their representatives to the end," said Raymond Coumont, leader of the Brussels trade union of office employees affiliated to the Federation of Christian Trade Unions. "In my view, it is the local unions that are to blame. They acted as rivals rather than allies. The Liège branch of the General Federation backed the strike and took the side of the dismissed worker activists. The local chapter of the Christian Trade Unions also opposed the unlawful dismissals of the trade unionists—but refused to back the strike under the pretext that it did not want to contribute to "the economic suicide of the enterprise."

"Lack of unity and solidarity costs the working-class movement dear," the New Times correspondent was told by Frans Vyt, general secretary of the Antwerp branch of the General Federation of Labour. More than 80 per cent of the Belgian work force are trade union members. Potentially, it is a formidable force though in effect efforts to stand up for the interests of the working class rarely succeed. It is not a national syndrome: the picture is much the same in other West European countries. The labour movement in Belgium is divided into two large detachments, the General Federation and the Federation of Christian Trade Unions. Their strength is roughly equal but their political orientations are different. Strategic and tactical differences are making it difficult to form a united front against the right-of-the-centre government and the onslaught of the proprietors."

VYACHESLAV BOIKOV

Brussels

Tens of thousands of peace campaigners held a meeting in front of San Francisco Town Hall at the end of April.

TASS photo

• U.S.A. 150,000

"No to 'star wars,'" "Money for peace, not for war," read the streamers carried by the 150,000 marchers who converged outside the White House and then proceeded to the Congress building on April 25.

Is 150,000 many or few? The question is being widely discussed in the West. Compared with the peace demonstrations of twenty years ago the figure is perhaps not very impressive. At that time the protest movement against the Vietnam war swept the country. The war claimed its victims not only among those who fought in it, but also those who fought against it. The students shot by national guardsmen at the Kent University campus were symbols of the awakening consciousness of the nation.

Though less dramatic, the anti-war actions of the 1980s rival them nevertheless in importance, signifying as they do the nation's awakening to the need to fight the threat of mankind's annihilation.

However, neither in the past nor at present could mere statistics describe the scale of the movement. My American acquaintances used to boast that almost every other U.S. citizen has now formed an anti-war organization with its own programme. This may sound wonderful, but, on the other hand, this practice creates difficulties in conducting campaigns capable of carrying any weight with the government.

The significance of the April 25 march lies in the fact that it has rallied over 200 political, trade union, religious, women's, professional and youth groups under a single banner. Its sponsors defined the campaign as national mobilization for peace and justice.

"This is the voice of the new generation," a veteran of the actions of the 1960s said, addressing the rally. "They are carrying forward our cause."

The anti-war movement of the 1980s is manifested in various forms in the United States: civil disobedience campaigns, picketing of nuclear proving grounds and other military installations, collecting of signatures, scientists' conferences, peace marches. The latest peace march was held countrywide. Representatives of anti-war organizations are lobbying Congress. Recently I learned of such a purely U.S. phenomenon as the creation of a computer network which is being fed a special programme dealing with the issue of war and peace. Several years ago, in Keene, New Hampshire, peace campaigners would gather in the central square and, joining hands, keep their silent peace vigil for hours. "We do it every Sunday," they said. "Anyone can join us, and we close ranks as soon as anyone leaves. In this way we appeal to the consciousness of our countrymen. Our silent protest has proved vocal, for our numbers are growing."

"It is the consciousness of America that is speaking," says a voice addressing the crowd in front of the White House on April 25. "We demand a radical change in the policy of the administration, which is fanning militarism."

GALINA SIDOROVA

Realistic approach

It can safely be said that the results of the Soviet-Syrian summit talks held during the Moscow visit of President Hafez Assad of Syria in late April are already being closely looked at by "whoever they may concern," especially in the capitals of those countries that consider themselves to be involved in everything that is in one way or another associated with the Middle East. Several factors testify to the emergence in outline of a new approach to the problem of untangling the complexities of the Middle East, described by Mikhail Gorbachev as one of today's "most complex and confused."

First. These talks have stressed with more conviction and vigour than ever before the futility of reliance on military force in settling the Middle East conflict. It is due to this reliance on force that the situation in the Middle East continues to be explosive and somewhat unpredictable. Israel and the imperialist forces that stand behind it have, with justice, been blamed for this. Whatever arguments Israeli ruling circles may advance to justify their actions, the hard facts are as follows: the occupation of Arab territories continues, the Palestinian people is denied the right to self-determination, and state-sponsored terrorism is becoming the order of the day. This course is so absurd that, looking at it from the point of view of Israel's survival as a Middle East state, the question suggests itself: are the Israeli leaders guided by these interests in their policy? And if not, what (or whose) interests are they guided by? Perhaps the search for an answer to such questions has been one of the reasons for growing internal criticism of Israel's militaristic policy.

In recklessly following the "war trail" in the Middle East, Israel and its backers apparently hope that the Arab states, permanently exposed to the sword of Damocles (Israel), will themselves be entrapped by the logic of military confrontation for a long time, if not forever. This in turn could be used to justify the continued anti-Arab expansionist line in the eyes of the public in Israel (and elsewhere). However, it is clear to any reasonable person that a just and durable Middle East settlement can only be achieved by political methods and not by the use of force. Awareness of this is imperative. The time limit for regional conflicts is running out.

Second. A potent argument in favour of a political settlement in the Middle East is the fact that this settlement is within reach provided, of course, that the interested parties have the good will and readiness to reach for it. The instrument with which such a settlement can be brought about is already known: it is an international conference on the Middle East given, of course, the good will.

The idea of holding such a forum is not new, but its vicissitudes have been many. The most important thing is that a new situation is now taking shape with regard to it. The idea of a conference has been backed by the U.N. General Assembly, the non-aligned movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the European Economic Community and many other social and political forces of various orientation. It is a fact that even the U.S. and Israel cannot afford to be blind to. This logically suggests that a breakthrough towards overcoming the Middle East crisis on a just and multilateral basis can best be achieved by the earliest convocation of an international conference.

Will Washington and Tel Aviv understand that in the long run it is in their own interests to march in step with the international community? Will they understand that it is high time they took account of the new realities and discarded the attributes of imperial policies and chauvinistic ambitions? One would like to see this understanding come to them sooner rather than later. It would spare the peoples of the Middle East a great deal of hardship.

Israel's position on an international conference and a just political settlement of the conflict is of direct relevance to a secure future for the Israeli state and its relations with other countries, including the Soviet Union. If, that is, the Israeli leaders are genuinely concerned. This, incidentally, was one of the i's dotted during the April summit in Moscow. It is there for all to see who wish to do so.

The common Soviet-Syrian support for an international Middle East conference as a sure path to a settlement in the region will undoubtedly have growing impact on developments in the matter of convening the forum.

Third. The Moscow talks looked from a new angle at the vitally important question of cohesion and coordination between Arab states. Paradoxical as it may seem, there is less unanimity in the Arab world than elsewhere on the problem of the Middle East. This situation was intolerable in the past. There is an even greater need to change the situation radically today.

Forces friendly to the Arab peoples expect the Arab states to make effective efforts to overcome their disunity and divisions. The supreme national interests should take precedence over everything that impedes this. That is why the participants in the Moscow meeting welcomed the efforts of the Palestinians to restore the unity of the Palestine Liberation Organization. If the national-patriotic potential of the Arab peoples is used to the full, then, combined with the efforts of other forces for peace, real progress can be made towards convening an international conference and bringing about a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

Fourth. The Moscow talks have brought convincing proof that the friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Syria, based on the common fundamental national interests of the two peoples, have always been an important factor contributing to peace and security in the Middle East and the world. The accords reached during the Moscow meeting, including further Soviet assistance to Syria in strengthening its defences, is fresh proof of the strength of Soviet-Syrian relations and a guarantee of their fruitful development.

YURI POTOMOV

MIDDLE EAST

PLO unity restored

● THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT HAS LARGELY BEEN ABLE TO RESTORE UNITY TO ITS RANKS.

This is borne out by the results of the 18th session of the Palestine National Council (parliament in exile), which ended in Algiers on April 26. Over the past few years the Palestine Liberation Organization has been weakened by bitter internal dissent and even a split in the leadership. While the situation in the Middle East was deteriorating as a result of actions by the imperialist forces, particularly Israel and the United States, the various groups within the Palestinian movement found themselves divided.

This aggravated the condition of the much suffering Palestinian people. Taking advantage of the rift in Palestinian ranks, the Israeli intruders intensified their repression on the occupied Jordan West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. A tragic situation developed in Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Meanwhile, the leaders of major groups within the PLO were unable to agree on joint action and a common stand in the new situation.

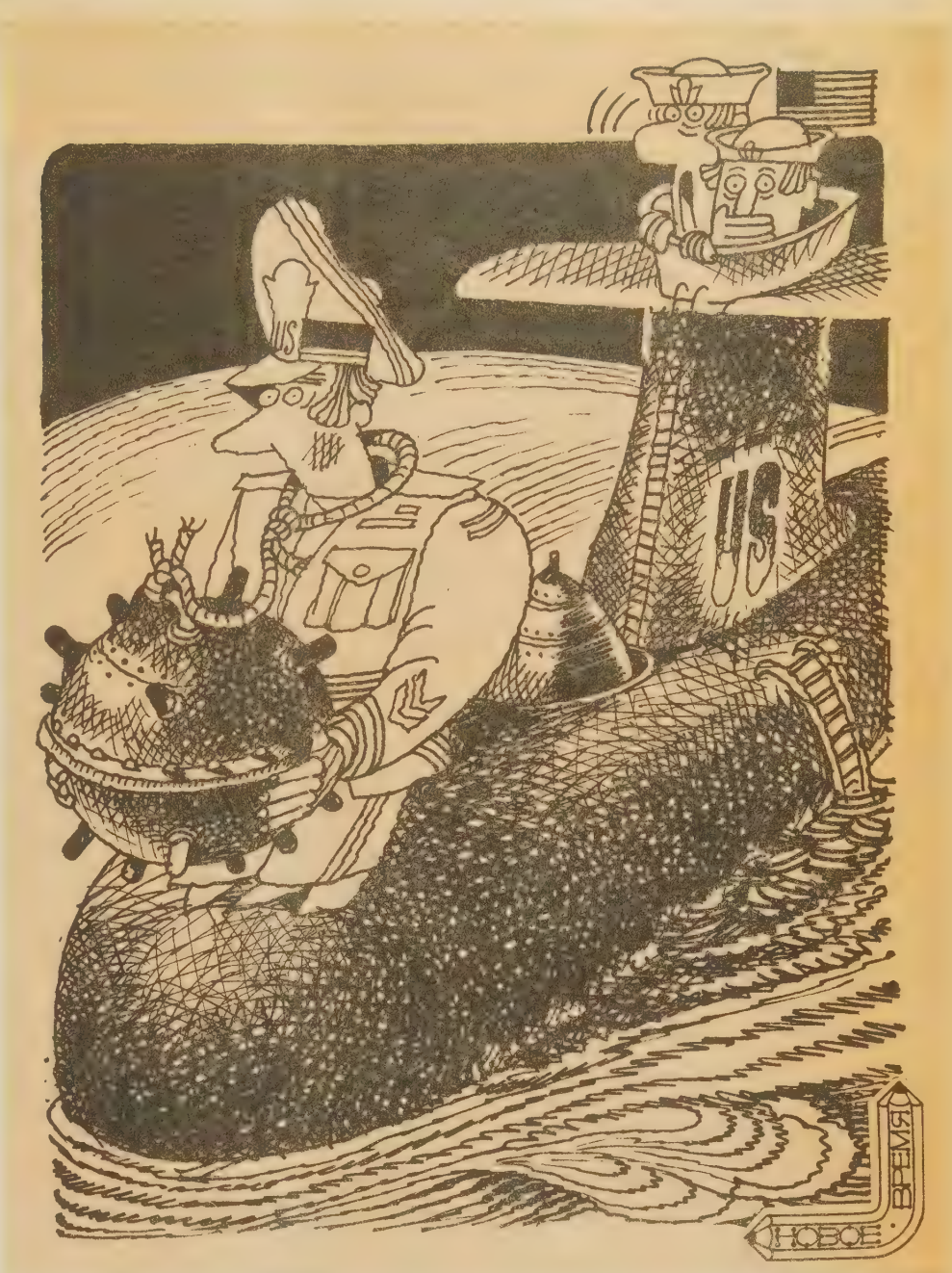
To judge from the decisions of the 18th session of the Palestine National Council, the differences have been ironed out. The road to the Algiers meeting proved difficult indeed. It took considerable effort, patience and wisdom on the part of the leaders of major groups within the PLO to remove—in the course of long and frank talks—the obstacles that had for several years divided the movement.

Many journalists were in Algiers to report on the session. Some of my Western colleagues did not conceal their scepticism as to the possible outcome. The rift in the PLO, they said, was too deep, and this would inevitably come to light as soon as the Palestinian parliament in exile met. But the representatives of the Palestinian people felt differently.

"The fact that the Palestine National Council is resuming its work after a long interval and that it enjoys the support of all major groups within the PLO means a victory for unity," one of the participants told me before the session opened.

The plenary sittings, discussions in the commissions and heated arguments in the lobbies were characterized by the desire to heal the split and restore unity. Decisions stressing the need to restore and strengthen the unity of the Palestinian Resistance movement and the importance of rallying Palestinians on an anti-imperialist platform were adopted almost unanimously.

The session came out in



"What's got into him! We haven't made an arms cuts deal with the Russians, have we!"

Cartoon by V. Arsenyev

favour of more extensive co-operation with the socialist countries. It also supported the constructive peace initiatives of the Soviet Union. The decisions, passed after heated debate, give a rebuff to those who want to impose defeatist deals, like the Camp David accord, on the Palestinian people. Delegates gave firm backing to the idea of convening an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and all interested parties, the PLO, of course, included.

The final day of the session was the most strenuous and exciting. Having failed to find anything to sensationalize, Western correspondents, who had come to the session in the hope of reporting a wider split in Palestinian ranks, quietly left Algiers. They realized that the session would adopt decisions that would not be prominently featured by the capitalist press. On that day the political commission of the Palestine National Council was in almost uninterrupted session, drafting the final documents and a political programme.

The programme was adopted late in the evening, with only one delegate voting against it.

I asked Saleh Raafat, a member of the Political Bureau and CC secretary of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, to comment on the results of the final sitting.

"The 18th session of the Palestine National Council has proved an exceptionally important event for all of us fighters for the Padestinian cause," he said. "The political resolution confirmed decisions that make it possible to continue the joint struggle of Palestinian Resistance detachments against imperialism and Zionism."

And Leila Khaled, a member of the Palestine National Council and of the Central Committee of the Popular Front of Palestine, had this to say:

"We had to decide what means of struggle and what programme to choose. Our enemies benefited from the split within the PLO, and our friends found it difficult to show their solidarity. My fellow fighters and I are happy that a programme for the reunification of the PLO has been worked out. Unity is the Palestinians' greatest weapon."

The session elected a new executive committee of the PLO, which now has 15 members. Yasser Arafat was re-elected chairman of the PLO executive.

EVGENY BOBROV
our own correspondent
Algiers

SOUTH AFRICA

Elections, indeed!

● PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR MAY 6 IN SOUTH AFRICA. BUT ONLY WHITES WILL GO TO THE POLLS.

Elections will be held only to the "white" chamber of parliament because the majority of "coloureds" and people of Indian descent, for whom two separate chambers were instituted under the Constitution of 1984, boycotted the elections held in the same year. Africans, who constitute more than 70 per cent of the population, have no franchise at all.

Voting on May 6 will take place in a tense political situation, with the anti-apartheid struggle continuing unabated and the emergency laws introduced last June still in force. Thousands of people, among them children, have been gaoled. African villages and townships are still occupied by troops and police.

What impelled the government in these circumstances to announce an early election, two years before the expiry of the term permitted by law? President Botha says he needs a mandate from all whites to continue his policy of reforms. But what reforms can he boast of? He has established a tricameral parliament in which "coloureds" and people of Indian descent effectively have no rights, repealed the ban on mixed marriages introduced several decades ago, and abolished the pass laws that restrict the movements of blacks. However, these reforms have left intact the foundation of apartheid: residential and educational segregation. Botha himself has vowed that for as long as he is alive the system will remain unshaken.

For various reasons, this policy of President Botha's does not suit many Afrikaners, who account for 60 per cent of South Africa's five-million-strong white community (the rest are English-speaking whites). The Afrikaners, Afrikaans-speaking descendants of Dutch and French settlers, constitute the mainstay of the Botha-led Nationalist Party that has ruled the country since 1948. Most of them are rich farmers who employ black labourers to cultivate their fields and vineyards. These farmers see the ruling party as the guarantor of their well-being under the apartheid system and their protector against the wrath of the blacks.

There is, however, no unity in the once serried Afrikaner ranks. An ultra-right faction that broke away from the Nationalist Party in 1981 formed the opposition Conservative Party, bringing together the opponents not only of reforms but even of any talk of them. The same die-hard position is held by the Herstigte Nasionale Party, also a splinter group of the ruling party. The Afrikaner Resistance Movement is openly neonazi. Newspapers estimate that these ultra-right factions reflect the views of no more than 15 per cent of the Afrikaner community.

But today the ruling camp is far less worried by "the threat from the right" than by the flight from the Nationalist Party of prominent members who believe the government is dragging its heels in carrying out essential reforms. They have broken away from their party and decided to run in the elections as independent candidates. The unofficial leader of these "new nationalists," as they are called, is Denis Worrall, who until recently was South Africa's ambassador in London, but left his post and returned home to join the political struggle.

Liberal representatives of the white community, opposed to the ruling party, are grouped traditionally around the Progressive Federal Party. Its core is made up of English-speaking whites, many of whom are employers, big shareholders and heads of large transnational corporations based in South Africa. Apartheid has long been a hindrance to their business activities.

The leaders of the Progressive Federal Party are calling for the release of Nelson Mandela, the legalization of the African National Congress and dialogue with it. At the same time they favour the abolition of apartheid by constitutional methods and condemn any violence. Now that the "new nationalists" are breaking with Botha, the "progressists," who hold only 27 of the 178 seats in parliament, cherish hopes of creating "a moderate alliance" that will replace the Nationalist Party at the helm of state.

However, the liberals' hopes for the abolition of apartheid by constitutional means seem illusory in the present situation. The fate of apartheid will be decided by the struggle of the broad masses, which is not abating despite savage repressions by the racist authorities.

YURI BOCHKARYOV

SRI LANKA

Tensions erupt into bloodshed

● THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SRI LANKA HAS DETERIORATED SHARPLY, WITH VIOLENCE LEADING TO THE MASS KILLINGS IN THE SECOND HALF OF APRIL.

On April 17 a group of terrorists stopped several buses on a road near the town of Habarane and opened fire with automatic rifles, killing 126 passengers on the spot. Two days later 15 people, among them five children, were massacred in a raid on the Sinhalese village of Jayanthipura, not far from the town of Kantalai. On the evening of April 21, when hundreds of people were waiting for buses after work, a huge bomb exploded at the central bus depot in Colombo. Over 100 died and about 300 were injured.

The authorities imposed a curfew on Colombo and a number of other areas, while the state of emergency declared in 1983 continued to operate on the island. The government put the blame for these acts of terrorism on Tamil militants from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Eelam Revolution Organization.

On April 22 the security forces launched operations in the Northern and Eastern provinces, where the camps, bases and hideouts of these organizations are situated.

The ethnic conflict has thus entered a new, and more acute phase, having been a dominant factor in Sri Lankan politics since the first big Sinhalese-Tamil conflicts in 1983.

Sri Lanka inherited the problem of conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities from the British colonialists, who pursued a divide-and-rule policy on the island. In the years since independence (1948) the problem has for a number of reasons been complicated still further.

The Sinhalese, who are predominantly Buddhist, constitute 72 per cent of the country's 16-million-strong population. The Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, represent the largest national minority (18 per cent). They believe they are being subjected to discrimination, and therefore widely support the demand for broad national autonomy. However, extremist elements in the Tamil community are seeking to establish a separate state of Tamil Eelam (the land of the Tamils) in the Northern and Eastern provinces, where they are a majority.

The main Tamil political party—the Tamil United Liberation Front—initially also campaigned for autonomy, but subsequently agreed that the interests of the community can be met within the context of a single Sri Lankan state. However, some other Tamil organizations, set up in the early 1970s, have not abandoned their separatist demands and have launched an armed struggle against the authorities.

Till 1983 their armed actions were limited in character. But after the anti-Tamil violence in the summer of that year feeling in the Tamil community changed, and hostility between the Sinhalese and Tamils increased dramatically. Since the autumn of 1983 large-scale clashes of varying intensity have taken place between government troops and armed Tamil groups. The population of the northern and eastern areas has been virtually cut off from the rest of the country. By the middle of April 1987 more than 4,500 people had been killed, and about 150,000 Tamils had fled Sri Lanka to escape the horrors of war. Most of them have settled in Tamil Nadu State in India.

All this has naturally inflamed passions and blighted the chances of a peaceful settlement of the ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, attempts to achieve a political settlement through the mediation of India have been repeatedly made over the past few years. But each time they were thwarted by the actions of numerous extremist elements in both communities.

In the spring of this year India again acted as a mediator between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil organizations. Once more a glimmer of hope appeared. But this hope was not fulfilled. The massacres staged by the terrorists in April seriously undermined prospects of settling the conflict. About 1,000 people, for the most part civilians, have been killed since April 17. Extremist elements, opposed to negotiations and compromises, have become active in both camps.

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka has condemned the acts of terrorism and urged the working people to prevent possible eruptions of Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. A similar position has been adopted by the Socialist and People's parties. Some ministers in the Sri Lankan government—members of the United National Party—are calling for balanced and cautious action. The terrorists' crimes frustrating efforts for a peaceful settlement of the communal strife have been strongly condemned in India as well.

GENNADY ANDREYEV

Cherchez la femme

News items that bear a surprising resemblance to each other appear from time to time in the press in different countries. They all claim to be based on authentic information, but all they actually have in common is that they adduce arguments totally divorced from real facts, and all of them are unambiguously anti-Soviet. A recent sample of this kind of writing occurred in the Sudanese newspaper Al-Rayah. What is the origin of such cock-and-bull stories?

Al-Rayah borrowed its item from a document circulated by the U.S. cultural centre in Khartoum, which had itself received it from the U.S. State Department or, rather, its department of disinformation analysis and countermeasures.

Set up some twelve months ago, the department is headed by assistant under-secretary of state Kathleen Bailey. Together with the U.S. Information Agency, it coordinates the work of numerous state and private organizations specializing in propaganda warfare. Their aim is to discredit Soviet disarmament moves, undermine the independent policies of developing countries, compromize the West European peace movement, obstruct the actions of the U.S. rivals, for instance, Japan, on the world market, in short, to do everything to make U.S. image seem more attractive in any situation.

The department's first ventures were anything but successful. The anti-Libyan campaign it helped launch foundered, but this did not seem to discourage either Ms Bailey or even higher echelons in Washington, for they failed to draw the obvious conclusion that sound politics and blatant falsehood are incompatible.

Late last year Ms Bailey made an unofficial tour of Western Europe and Africa. This was followed by typical articles appearing in the Swiss Tribune de Genève, as well as the Zimbabwean Financial Gazette, Nigerian Punch and some other African newspapers.

It now looks as if Ms Bailey has scored another point, this time through the good offices of the none-too-discriminating Sudanese paper.

M. P.

FRANCE AND THE NUCLEAR GUILLOTINE

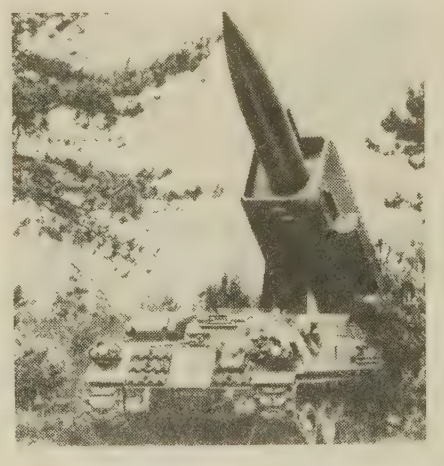
What is Paris' stand on nuclear disarmament, reduction of military confrontation in Europe, and NATO?

Deterrence or disarmament?

The alternative faced by the world today—nuclear deterrence or nuclear disarmament—is of crucial importance, and is giving rise increasingly to heated debate in many European countries. And France is no exception. For many years Paris contended that there was a consensus on the nuclear arms issue in the country. But times are changing. Lately many Frenchmen have been asking themselves whether their government's stand on nuclear disarmament in the rapidly changing situation in Europe and the world is the right one. Is it not falling behind developments? Answers are contradictory.

To judge from official statements, Paris continues to regard nuclear deterrence as the principal means of ensuring the security of France and maintaining its international prestige. "Hands off our nuclear arsenal!"—French leaders warn time and again, for all that nobody is encroaching on it. It has been stated more than once by Moscow that the French nuclear potential is not included in the Soviet-American nuclear equation. "We have nothing to negotiate," categorically asserts François Fillon, chairman of the National Assembly's defence commission, who longs for a time when France will remain "the only nuclear power in continental Europe."

The advocates of nuclear arms, both in the ruling parties and among Socialists, cannot imagine a Europe without nuclear weapons and reject any French participation in the process of nuclear disarmament and reducing military confrontation in Europe. French right-wing circles reacted with confusion bordering at times on panic to the new Soviet proposals to eliminate medium- and short-range missiles and the U.S.S.R.'s readiness to include in the treaty an obligation to eliminate its operational-tactical missiles within a fixed time limit. The French Foreign Ministry expressed its "displeasure" at the Soviet initiatives, declaring that it was the French government's aim to "avert the emergence of a nuclear-free Europe." In an interview with France-Presse, Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond himself called on the U.S. administration "to think carefully before accepting the proposed gambit on missiles." He also supported the Pentagon's absurd idea of "converting American Pershing 2s into Pershing 1s in exchange for the elimination of all Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe.



What is this Pluton missile targeted on!
Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

Rid Europe of all nuclear missiles? This would be something little short of a catastrophe for the advocates of nuclear deterrence! Or at least a "trap." Official Paris is maintaining a bashful silence. "Paris has been put in an embarrassing position," says Le Monde. It would be more correct to say that it is Paris that has put itself in an embarrassing position by its unconstructive stand.

Supporters of nuclear deterrence in France are not troubling to conceal their low spirits. Prominent among them is former Prime Minister Raymond Barre. Usually restrained and calm, he has suddenly lost his coolness. The Western countries have been caught in "their own trap," the former premier declares, full of belligerent resolve and implacability. Speaking at the London International Institute for Strategic Studies, Barre said he had never regarded the "zero option" and the "neither SS-20s nor Pershings" formula as a desirable objective. He is horrified by the very idea that these missiles could be dismantled and Europe turned into a nuclear-free continent. Barre insists there should be no hesitation about building up the "abhorrent" nuclear weapons and providing the armed forces with the neutron bomb.

"The superiority of Warsaw Treaty countries in conventional armaments" is one of Raymond Barre's main arguments in favour of nuclear weapons. Of course, in putting forward his thesis he fails to mention the U.S.S.R.'s declared readiness for a substantial reduction in military confrontation between the two blocs in the field of conventional arms in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. His firebreathing speeches, and statements by other "nuclear fans," show that they are concerned not so much about the future of Europe as about their own nuclear ambitions, which run counter to the desire of the peoples of Europe to turn the continent into a nuclear-free zone.

This prompts the following question: why are French leaders unwilling to leave the trenches of the cold war in matters relating to disarmament, increasingly running the risk of finding themselves in "splendid isolation"? For some of them, Reykjavik was a veritable bolt from the blue. By all appearances they neither believe nor wish to believe in the possibility of a Soviet-American agreement on the total elimination of nuclear missiles in Europe. But even die-hard sceptics have been forced to admit that the new Soviet proposals, put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev in Prague, and subsequently during his meeting with George Shultz, create a real possibility of abolishing nuclear missiles in Europe, including operational-tactical ones.

But what do we hear from Paris? The old sceptical remarks and calls for "vigilance." The same adherence to the concept of nuclear deterrence that is blocking French foreign policy initiatives on the issues of peace and disarmament.

Many members of the present ruling coalition want France to take part in building the NATO "joint defence" and "European support," although this would in fact result in limiting French national sovereignty and subordinating it to the interests of NATO. They propose to pool French and British efforts in nuclear arms, strengthen France's military-strategic cooperation with Bonn, and thus open the French "nuclear umbrella" over the F.R.G. There are schemes to create a Paris-Bonn-London "triangle," a new military alliance within the framework of the Western European Union.

Debates continue to rage over the attitude of France to SDI and the creation of a "European SDI." Although President Mitterrand has spoken more than once against the militarization of outer space, major French companies are taking part in a number of projects under the SDI programme, and some members of the ruling coalition, in particular Defence Minister André Giraud, have stated that France cannot remain aloof from SDI. All these projects are aimed at preventing Europe becoming a continent free of nuclear arms and at aggravating its division into two opposing blocs. In these schemes France is assigned the role of one of the principal executors of NATO strategy.

The strategy of nuclear deterrence is not only paralyzing French foreign policy but also pushing the country into active involvement in the nuclear arms race. The new military programme for 1987-91, that brainchild of nuclear deterrence, approved by the deputies from all the right-wing parties plus the Socialists, provides for building up the main components of nuclear arms and manufacturing chemical and perhaps also neutron weapons. And this at a time when real changes are taking place on the way towards freeing Europe of nuclear and chemical weapons. Only Communist deputies voted against the military programme.

An extensive campaign to militarize the public consciousness and promote the cult of strength, and based on the concept of nuclear deterrence, has gained unprecedented scale in recent years. Whom does it serve? Not of course the French working people, but those who make money hand over fist from the arms race, foment anti-Soviet campaigns and count on confrontation rather than dialogue.

The impresssion is created that one of the main explanations for the ossification of the unconstructive French stand on nuclear arms is that the prospect of eliminating nuclear arms in Europe runs counter to the military-political course pursued by the French ruling circles. They evidently fear that in the event of advance towards a nuclear-free Europe, the question of the future of the French nuclear arsenal may arise. And that is something French hawks are flatly refusing to part with.

However, far from all in France are obsessed with nuclear mania. The "cannon patriotism" of military-industrial circles notwithstanding, the new thinking on nuclear issues is gaining ground in France too; albeit with great difficulty. The opponents of nuclear disarmament are wrong to assert that there is a "national consensus" on nuclear arms. No such consensus actually exists. Recent public opinion polls in France are revealing: 85 per cent of those questioned favoured active participation by their country in the discussion of disarmament problems, 55 per cent believed France should not start manufacturing new types of armament, 81 per cent said chemical weapons should be abolished, and 44 per cent view the new Soviet proposals as a chance that must be used to rid Europe of nuclear weapons.

The peace movement and the anti-war Appeal of 100 are gaining in strength. Professor Albert Jacquard of Paris University, a member of the movement, has said that awareness of the new situation is lagging behind the times in France and that some Frenchmen "are behaving like lunatics oblivious of reality." He has called for action to achieve a ban on nuclear tests and, to quote Albert Einstein, has asked for "a chain reaction of reasonable actions" to be opposed to the "chain reaction of neutrons."

Georges Séguy, one of the leaders of the Appeal of 100, has said that the Soviet proposals rest on an idea the movement has been upholding since 1982: "neither SS-20s nor Pershings." If this idea is implemented, it will be a truly historic event for Europe, he added. A national demonstration against the nuclear arms race will be held in mid-June on the initiative of the Appeal of 100. French Communists want their country to play an active role in helping to achieve peace, security and disarmament. They note that Mikhail Gorbachev's proposals on medium-range missiles are having a significant impact on the world situation. The French Communist Party has voiced its support for these proposals. "Whom do they want to persuade that the fewer missiles there are in the West and the East, the more dangers there will be for France?" read the statement adopted by the Political Bureau of the FCP. "Like the other European nations, France only stands to gain from arms reductions, détente, and cooperation and friendship among peoples."

EDUARD ARSENYEV

Military concept: a shift of emphasis

The negative attitude of Paris to the very idea of nuclear disarmament in Europe has attracted world public attention to the foreign policy concepts of France and its relationship with NATO.

Some news commentators in the West attribute the "unexpected turns" in French foreign policy to the fact that Paris is "constantly searching for a balance between independence of and solidarity with" the United States. Others say that though Paris is indeed trying to steer an independent course, its efforts are not always successful for reasons beyond its control. It is also surmised that the present French leaders have set their sights on abandoning de Gaulle's objectives and are gradually drawing the nation into the U.S. war machine.

In 1966 Charles de Gaulle pulled France out of NATO's military structure, declaring that its armed forces would no longer be placed under NATO command. He believed that France, and incidentally other European members of the bloc, could at any time become involved in U.S. military gambles that have nothing to do with their national interests. De Gaulle voiced repeated

fears that in a critical situation Washington could neglect the security interests of its junior partners and even put them in jeopardy.

Suspicions of this kind were engendered by the very structure and strategy of the bloc, and the military doctrine of the United States. NATO armed forces in Europe have always been under the command of American generals. In line with the "Athens guidelines," adopted by NATO in 1962, Washington has the decisive say in the matter of using nuclear weapons in critical situations.

The official aim of NATO's strategy of "flexible response" is to create, in the event of a conflict, "the maximum of uncertainty" for the Soviet Union as regards the character and scale of the bloc's combat operations. But in practice this strategy can create unprecedented uncertainty first and foremost for the European allies, who will have no say in deciding their own fate. Washington could unilaterally decide to use the territory of its allies as a springboard from which to deliver a first nuclear strike with all the disastrous consequences that would ensue. According to the U.S. military doctrine, combat operations, which would include the use of nuclear weapons, should be conducted far from American territory, for the most part in Europe.

The past few years have seen considerable changes in France's military policy and its relationship with NATO. In his letter to President Johnson of March 7, 1966, General de Gaulle wrote: "France intends to recover full sovereignty over its territory now limited because of the permanent presence of allied military units or the use of its air space, to withdraw from the integrated command and no longer place its armed forces at NATO's disposal."

According to France-Presse, the staff of the French armed forces has signed a number of secret agreements with the high command of NATO's armed forces in Europe providing, under certain circumstances, the use of French seaports, airfields and roads to transport the weapons and troops of the North Atlantic bloc.

After 1966 Paris adopted the concept of defence "along all azimuths," which effectively meant that its armed forces would not be directed exclusively against the socialist countries. The idea that France can ensure its defence "along all azimuths" is "a dangerous fiction," Jean Lecanuet, chairman of the Senate defence committee, says today. The senator urged Paris to integrate the French military potential with that of NATO.

Although France is not a member of NATO's military organization, its strong Mediterranean fleet, including two aircraft carriers, plays a considerable part in the planning of NATO's naval activities.

France cooperates with other NATO countries in the joint development of different types of weapon. For instance, together with the F.R.G. it is working to produce the Transall and reconnaissance Alpha Jet planes as well as the modern anti-tank Hot and Milan rockets and the anti-aircraft Roland missile.

The combat training of the French armed forces is carried out in close coordination with NATO countries. A number of large-scale joint military exercises are held every year. Last autumn, for instance, 3,600 French servicemen took part in the French-West German land and air exercises in Bavaria. These games were regarded by Washington and Bonn as an important military and political event, indicating that France was "gradually returning to the NATO framework." Units of the French rapid action force, destined for operations on "forward lines," are to conduct joint manoeuvres with West German troops on F.R.G. soil.

Speaking of Paris's military commitments with regard to the North Atlantic alliance, general Bernard Rogers, supreme allied commander of NATO's united forces in Europe, once remarked that if others knew what he knew they would not feel anxiety. During his visit to Paris the American general expressed confidence that in the event of an armed conflict in Europe the French armed forces would promptly join the troops of the United States and its allies.

As far back as 1981 President Mitterrand stressed in an interview for the West German magazine Stern that France would have no hesitation in supplementing the U.S. nuclear forces with its own deterrents. France's readiness to use the French nuclear forces in the defence of the F.R.G. is being openly discussed in Paris.

In view of this "extension of the zone of France's responsibility," as Americans say, Paris is replacing Pluton nuclear missiles, with a range of 120 kilometres, with Hades missiles, which can carry conventional, nuclear or neutron warheads capable of reaching the territory of Warsaw Treaty countries.

France proceeds from the NATO policy of first use of nuclear weapons at an early stage in any conflict in Europe. Premier Chirac has formulated the new concept of "deterrence" in this way: "The survival of France is decided on the Rhine, and its security on the Elbe."

Washington is satisfied with such a stance on Paris's part. President Reagan once noted that France continues to cooperate with NATO in all fields. For its part, the United States, as the American columnist Jack Anderson reported some time ago, assists France in building up its nuclear force. By 1992 the number of nuclear warheads on French sea- and land-based missiles will have risen fourfold to a total of 600 units. If the French nuclear force is a joke, an American journalist has observed, it is becoming less and less funny.

In the opinion of experts, the development of French cruise air-to-ground missiles will tie France to the United States and hence to NATO, still more closely because Paris will only be able

A routine French-F.R.G. military exercise.

Photo from L'Express (France)

to obtain its cruise flight programmes from the United States, which carries out radar surveys of territories in strategically important regions. Washington will naturally provide France with flight programmes that will aim cruise missiles exclusively at socialist countries.

The Chirac government has latterly been expanding cooperation with the United States and NATO in the military-political sphere as well. France is actively helping Washington counter the world public demand for a complete ban on nuclear testing. Since the mid-1970s more than 80 nuclear explosions have been carried out by France on the Mururoa atoll.

French scientists are working to create neutron bombs, toxic agents, nuclear weapons with an enhanced electromagnetic pulse, and miniature warheads intended to deal a first strike at pinpoint targets, missile silos included.

Paris supports the position of the United States, which refuses to pledge not to be first to use nuclear weapons. Reports say that Paris has decided to adapt the Eureka space programme to military needs and even link it with the Strategic Defence Initiative.

"The change, which is happening almost without discussion in France, and beyond the notice of public opinion in most NATO countries, is of obvious and major significance," the London newspaper the Guardian writes. "It means that the concepts of the Gaullist era are fading fast."

News commentators explain the current change of French military and political concepts in terms of "the desire of Paris to preserve its former imperial grandeur," and "considerations of prestige." Many Western experts believe, however, that military and political decision making in Paris is also greatly influenced by pressure from Washington.

The withdrawal of France from NATO's military structure was at the time welcomed by world opinion. France's independent policy led to the growth of its prestige and influence in international relations and enhanced its national security.

It should be noted that France's present leaders also refuse even to discuss the question of returning to NATO's military organization. However, the practical actions of the French government in the Atlantic field are likely to reduce the distinction between participation and nonparticipation in the military structure of the bloc to mere form.

VLADIMIR BOGACHEV

The U.S. wasn't in a hurry

Seventy years ago, in April 1917, the United States officially entered the first world war.

From the very beginning of the war President Woodrow Wilson had pursued a policy of neutrality, with his sights on the U.S. becoming the arbiter between the belligerents. Meanwhile the U.S. had its own irons in the fire: in 1916 it occupied the Dominican Republic, invaded Mexico at about the same time, and in 1917 occupied Cuba for the third time.

In those years the United States financed not only the Entente countries but also Germany. That this proved highly profitable was confirmed by President Wilson himself. "We have ceased to be a debtor nation and have become a creditor nation," he said then. "We have more of the surplus gold of the world than we ever had before.... We have got to finance the world in some important degree, and those who finance the world must understand it and rule it...."

Washington closely followed the hostilities in Europe, waiting for the precise moment when it could join in the war without great effort but with maximum advantage. That moment came when Germany intensified its unlimited war on the seas which spelt losses also for the United States.

It was only at the beginning of 1918 that the first American divisions took up positions in France. Until the spring of that year commander of the American forces in Europe General Pershing (whose name many years later was given to a missile) concentrated on training his troops and forming them into a separate army. In May 1918 his army helped the French to halt the German advance on Paris at Château-Thierry. After this, the U.S. First Army took part in the operation to clear the Saint-Mihiel salient of the enemy. In September of the same year the two American armies that had been formed by this time participated in the last general offensive—the Maas-Argonne operation, in which they were successful but suffered heavy losses. The Americans broke through the German positions only a day before the armistice was signed. By that time there were more than two million American troops in France.

According to figures published early in 1919, by the time of the armistice, the U.S. had lost some 70,000 men in killed and about 200,000 in wounded. For Britain the figures were ten times higher, for France, 20 and 14 times respectively, for Germany, 24 and 19 times.

The U.S. share in the war effort of the Entente amounted to 31 per cent in terms of manpower, 14 per cent in terms of artillery, and 13 per cent in terms of aircraft. U.S. expenditure on the war ranged between 22 and 41 billion dollars. At the same time, the debt of the Entente powers to the United States amounted to the enormous sum of $8,839 million. This made the U.S. the world's biggest creditor for government loans and the second biggest, for private loans.

Street scene in New York in April 1917.

MIKHAIL SEMIRYAGA

We were saddened to learn of the natural disaster in the Georgian mountains. We would like to know more about the area, and the consequences of the disaster.

ENZO CAMARI
Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy

This year Svanetia, a region in the Republic of Georgia, attracted the attention of the whole nation. It was hit by heavy snowfall which caused avalanches and landslides. There was a surge of sympathy for the victims.

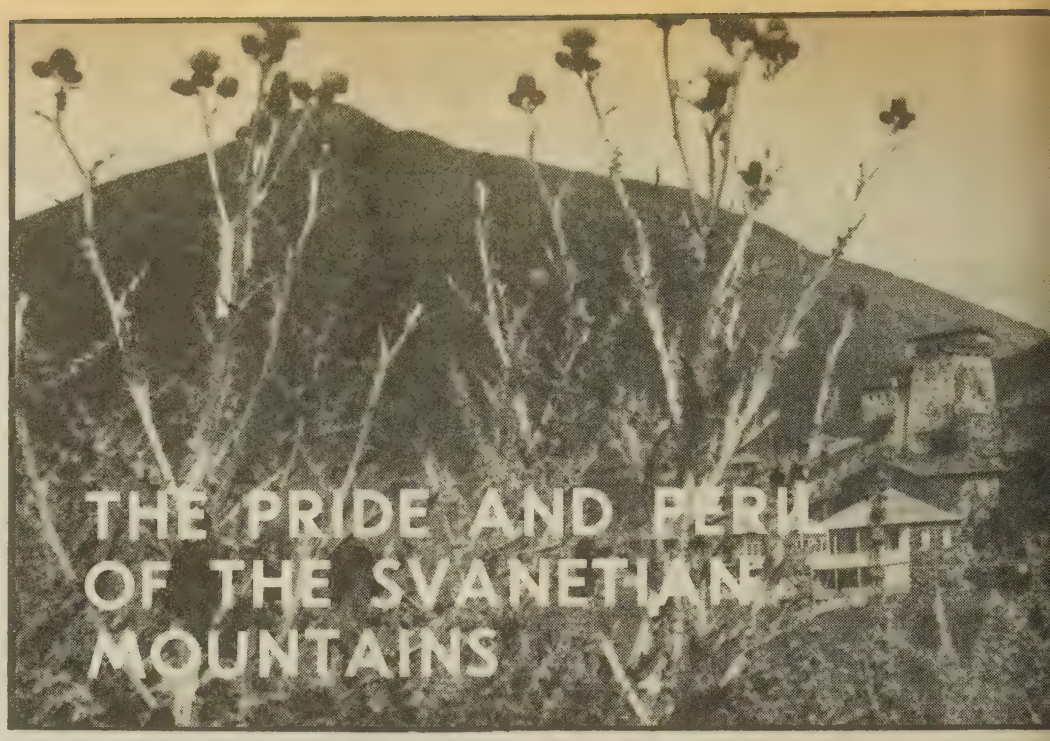
Thousands of people evacuated from the danger zone were settled in other parts of Georgia. They were given government aid, augmented by thirty-odd million rubles donated by private individuals in Georgia, Russia, the Baltic, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and other parts of the Soviet Union. I was in Svanetia in those dramatic days and saw the damage caused by the disaster: hundreds of houses were destroyed and thousands of cattle died. There were human casualties as well.

It is a pity that it has taken these unfortunate events to bring Svanetia to public notice. Yet the highlands of Georgia have a unique natural beauty, which only reveals itself to those who have come to know and love it.

Alevtina Levina, a special correspondent for the newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda, is such a person. She discovered Svanetia for the national press. She climbed its mountains to see the handsome people that inhabit them.

Alevtina Levina's photograph was taken on a quiet summer day in the village of Ushguli. The second photo is mine, taken of the same village last winter. It shows women making their way to the cemetery where the victims of the avalanche are buried.

YURI ROST



THE PRIDE AND PERIL OF THE SVANETIAN MOUNTAINS

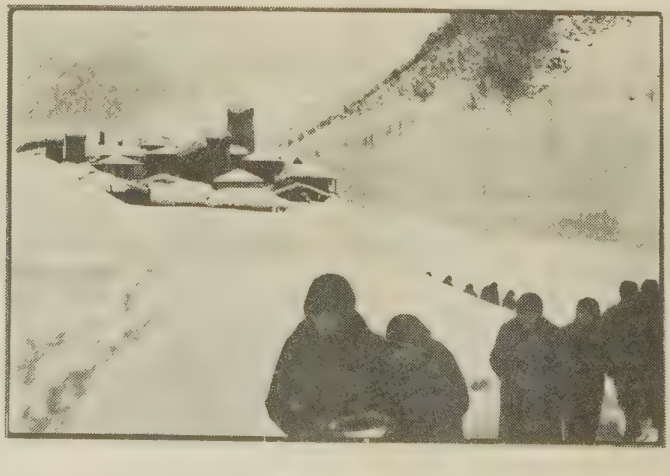
We have one more kilometre to go.

It is night. The mountains are etched against the dark purple sky full of shimmering twinkling stars. The road leads to Ushguli. "You want to go to Ushguli?" they asked at the district centre. "Can you climb? Fifty kilometres is no joking matter." They suggested an easier route.

I am almost physically aware of growing resistance to my progress as I slog forward. As we approach our goal our pace drops to almost nil. The change in pace on our journey has been truly dramatic. Two carefree hours on a plane from Moscow to Kutaisi, then two anxious days on board a bus making its way along a dizzying cornice above a raging river. Then fifty kilometres of mountain roads where the water in the car's radiator boiled every half hour, followed by a trek at a snail's pace along a stony narrow path girding a cliff edge. But he who is ready to fly, run, walk and crawl using his last ounce of strength will reach his destination.

We have half a kilometre to go. The last steps over the mountain. There are shooting stars in the sky. An earth satellite passes slowly overhead. At last we see lights in the distance. They grow brighter as we approach. I wonder if there is any other village in Europe that is higher above sea level than Ushguli. It is thrilling to think that in all of Europe only mountaineers and pilots are closer to the stars than we are.

It has been an arduous journey but it was worth it. Fifty kilometres of discoveries, impressions, meetings. The Ughyr Pass with its sweeping view of the valley, the majestic summits of the forbidding Mt. Ushba and the gentle Mt. Tetnulda. You feel as if you are growing wings. Someone once wrote that even if Svanetia had nothing to offer but this breathtaking view, it would still be worth braving the hazards of the journey.



The main landmark of Svanetia, the Kvirik and Ivlita Monastery, stands as a monument not to the slavish worship of God but to the proud spirit of the anonymous craftsmen who built it. The local museum in Svanetia displays cultural treasures. According to local custom, the people should guard these treasures. For eight centuries volunteer guards have taken care of riches that would be the envy of any museum in the world.

With our party is Leila, a native of Ushguli. She is returning home from a vacation. Leila offers to put us up for the night.

In the morning I am woken by a song. The leading voice is as clear as a mountain spring. Two other voices add notes of joy and sorrow. In the morning everything looks different. Gone are the mysterious giants, instead I see lean, austere towers

and mountains bathed in the rosy colours of dawn. Beyond is a lone campanile. And higher still, the dazzling snow-capped Mt. Shkhara.

I labour my way to the top of a tower. In the patios below children are cavorting. A string of horsemen weaves its way along the canyon.

On the slope beyond the towers are square patches of fields. This is priceless soil. Not a gift of nature, but entirely man-made. In the whole of mountainous Svanetia there is not a square inch of land fit for raising crops. Every square metre has been cultivated by generations of farmers.

There are hardly any adults to be seen in the village in the daytime. The summer is a busy season, followed by the long seven-month winter when the footpaths are under three metres of snow. You can't even get to the forest to cut firewood. Leila told me that last year she spent several months working on a farm with her friends. She was eight kilometres from home but it was as if she were on another planet. "Did you live like hermits? And what did you eat?" "We had brought several sacks of flour. We also had milk, cheese and meat. In short, a natural economy. We weren't bored. In the evening we sang, retold the stories of books we had read and joked. We had rifles to protect ourselves from wild animals."

They saved all the cattle and reared all the calves. Nobody praised the girls for this. Nobody called them heroines. It was their duty. The locals take it for granted that every family in this remote mountain village has a college student. Young people want to study. It's natural. In this land of skilful hunters and hardworking farmers they say disapprovingly of lazy people: "He isn't fit for any job, he hasn't even finished secondary school."

As I learned later, the figure for people with a college education in the mountain areas of Svanetia is one of the highest in the whole of Georgia.

In a land where man's endurance is constantly being pitted against the forces of nature, strong, independent characters are formed. Hardship has not made the people dour or embittered. On the contrary, they are great merrymakers and jokers. They are as tireless in work as they are in merrymaking.

Before we left we had a send-off party for the climbers who had put up in Leila father's house. The first toast was to the guests I knew that eloquence is prized in Svanetia as much as strength and intelligence. The host got to his feet. He spoke of the mountains and the people.

"Mountains are the pride of our people," he said. "But they bring us misfortune as often as joy. The mountains are huge. What do you call people who have the courage to challenge the mountains? Those who climb the highest peak see further than others. They are seekers after beauty, people with intrepid hearts. Only courageous people are able to enjoy the full beauty of the world. Sometimes climbers die before they have seen all this beauty. But others will follow in their footsteps. Everyone should try to reach his own summit, so let our hearts be full of courage."

I was told that Ushguli is short for "ushishari guli" which means "fearless heart."

ALEVTINA LEVINA

The damage done to Georgia by the avalanches is estimated at over 350 million rubles. Some 4,500 houses have been destroyed or damaged. Many industries and farms, hundreds of polyclinics, schools, child-care centres and clubs have suffered.

In Ushguli, for example, only four of the 42 houses have survived. Some 1,800 kilometres of motor roads and more than 1,300 kilometres of communication lines have been put out of action. Over 80,000 hectares of ploughland and perennial crops have been damaged and 110 people have perished. Upper Svanetia was the hardest hit. This year there were 330 avalanches between January 9 and 31 as compared with the usual 30-40 a year.

The consequences of the devastation would have been much greater had not people all over the country come to the rescue. Russian helicopter pilot Tarykin and his crew made 24 flights to rescue 133 people on a single day in February. Rakhim Mamedov, a native of Azerbaijan, saved 28 people, among them 19 children, at the cost of his own life.

Today rehabilitation work is in full swing in the stricken areas. The Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. have adopted a decision "On measures to assist the Georgian S.S.R. in dealing with the consequences of natural disaster." Millions of rubles have been earmarked for additional capital investment in the republic, and its citizens given various benefits and credits. The whole country came to the aid of the republic doing voluntary days of unpaid work and sending parcels of food and other prime necessities.

SCIENCE AND NEW THINKING

Academician VITALY GOLDANSKY

It is common knowledge that in the context of the mid-20th-century scientific and technological revolution science possesses a colossal potential for both construction and destruction. Everything depends on how science is used. But if only a few decades ago it was regarded with respect bordering on awe, if many saw it as something of a panacea for the ills besetting mankind, today the opposite view—that science is the source of all evil—is becoming more and more prevalent.

Indeed, we are witnessing scientific achievements that have radically affected the conditions of human existence, all aspects of our life (material and hence spiritual). Here I would like to underscore that not enough light has been thrown on the important contribution modern science, scientific and technological progresss is making to the theoretical substantiation of the new thinking that is asserting itself in both the foreign policy (avenues to a nuclear-free world) and the domestic policy (democratization and openness) of the CPSU and our country. In other words, the new thinking is pivoted not on illusory notions, it is dictated not by arbitrariness, but by a strictly scientific, realistc approach to the conditions of human existence today, by a thorough appraisal of all the factors of scientific and technological progress. It is a concrete, theoretically substantiated policy, the product of the present stage in the development of society, science and technology.

Progress in science and technology helps lay the theoretical groundwork for new thinking in both foreign policy (avenues to a nuclear-free world) and the domestic policy (democratization and openness) of the CPSU.

Nuclear super-armament has brought the world to the dangerous point where the very existence of humanity is threatened. It has become clear that with the nuclear weaponry accumulated to date, any global war, should it break out, would inevitably develop into a nuclear war. Even an "ordinary" armed conflict in this age of nuclear power production could lead to massive casualties through radiation caused by the damage done to nuclear reactors.

Extremely rapid is the development of devices for keeping track of everything that is being done on our planet (and often also underwater or underground) from outer space by means of spy satellites equipped with all manner of sensors. The earth, our common home, is thus wide open to surveillance by an all-seeing eye looking down from space. For instance, figures on licence plates are clearly visible on photographs taken from an altitude of hundreds of kilometres. At the same time, mastery of outer space and possession of the latest means of surveillance, in a word, the level attained by information science, have afforded radically new opportunities for the strictest mutual verification of the observance of all international agreements. Such verification can and should be the guarantee of the establishment of mutual trust, a reliable obstacle to the drifting of humanity not only to nuclear war but to wars fought with conventional armaments. In the present conditions created by scientific and technological progress any repetition of what happened on June 22, 1941, when the colossal nazi war machine suddenly pounced on our country, is totally excluded.

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Under the impact of scientific and technological progress on international politics, the dogmatic assertion that a nuclear holocaust can bring victory (or defeat) to one or another social system has given way to the realization that in a nuclear war there can be no victors. People are coming to see that nuclear war is tantamount to the self-destruction of human civilization. Lenin's thesis that human values take priority over the objectives of one or another class has found new emphatic confirmation. Hence the totally new approach to foreign policy issues that is reflected in many of our programme documents.

But if realization of the implications of such factors as nuclear super-armament and the possibility of comprehensive verification argues in favour of Soviet foreign policy, of our programme of "disarmament for development" (the antipode of "armament instead of development"), the extraordinary progress in information science and computerization, in the means of global communication and the extensive use of outer space has logically led to another, internal political aspect of the new thinking. It offers further scientific confirmation of the need for democratization and openness which naturally follow from Marxism, the only possible and rational foundation of socialist society.

Being a stimulator and the material basis of democratization and openness, the scientific and technological revolution brings out in still bolder relief the advantages of socialism. Let us examine this more closely in the light primarily of the specific character and tasks of science.

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What, it may be asked, is the most characteristic feature of our time—this time of unprecedented progress in electronics, computerization, space exploration and rapid advance of science in general?

Above all, there is the ever-mounting influx of information, its increasing range, volume and the speed of disseminating, the sophistication of the means of data recording, storing and transfer. Take, for instance, such basic features of modern computers and other data systems as memory and speed (already in the offing are ultra-modern molecular computers, which will break all records for concentration of information per unit of volume), the ever-increasing quantity of information sources—

periodicals, books and scientific articles. Terms like "indexing," "key words," "automated data-processing" are becoming more and more common.

The advent of diverse data banks with automated inlet and outlet terminals marks a breakthrough in international information and communication. International radio broadcasting is gradually being relegated to the background by international space television. More and more widely used (so far mainly in the West) are personal computers. Distinguished by their data storage capacity and versatility, they are—and this is of no little importance—becoming data duplicators as well. Colossal as it is, their memory keeps expanding, the network of their links with other data banks is becoming increasingly ramified and intricate. Computer languages, such as Algol and Fortran, are developing into a sort of latter-day Esperanto.

Worldwide radio and television transmission in these machine languages, their reception by personal computers and programmed data processing are undoubtedly a matter of the foreseeable future.

Whether this is "good" or "bad," whether we should praise or blame science for all this is beside the point. All this is a fact of life, an inseparable feature of our time, the time we live in, a reality that has to be reckoned with, by which we have to be guided if we are not to lag hopelessly behind the times not only technically but also in our thinking.

And here, in my view, it is necessary to make full use of that vast potential of socialist society which for so many years was virtually forgotten and which now has been brought to the fore —democratization and openness.

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There are, then, two options. On the one hand, democratization and openness, and on the other, walling oneself off from information, wearing blinkers, building bigger, thicker, higher fences. Clearly, only the first of these alternatives, the one the Party is advocating, is in step with scientific and technological progress, moreover is based on that progress, and gives

In socialist society, the maximum information must be made available to the people.

maximum impetus to further advance of science and technology whereas the latter is an impediment to, a brake on progress.

In socialist society, people must be well-informed, must have the maximum information at their disposal. This thesis is based on deep faith in the unlimited opportunities socialist society affords for the flowering of the human personality. Otherwise propaganda threatens to become inept and dull, invariably belated, its arguments threadbare and outdated, designed to combat not the real, strong opponent but a mythical dull-witted adversary, and as often as not, with the exclusion of the strongest and most incisive facts from our own arsenal, facts which for one reason or another the pseudo-propagandist prefers to conceal.

Openness plays an enormous role also in ensuring an effective feedback in terms of truly scientific sociological analysis of the response, the reaction of the people to the initiatives of the Party and the government, to world developments. What we need is not nebulous wishful thinking, not the thunderous echoes of self-congratulatory exhortations and success-reports, but honest, objective and impartial analysis of everything that is happening around us.

"Our strength," Lenin said, "lies in stating the truth!" It is this conviction that enabled us to admit openly and honestly from the rostrum of a recent plenary meeting of the Central Committee that "serious shortcomings in ideological and political educational work were in many cases covered up by the staging of showy campaigns and events, by numerous jubilee celebrations both in the centre and in the localities" with the result that "the world of everyday realities and the world of ostentatious well-being moved farther and farther apart."

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It is precisely because our restructuring is based on a strictly scientific foundation and not on mere whim, because it is a clear-cut, theoretically substantiated programme of action that it causes undisguised alarm among anti-Soviet circles in the West. The policy of democratization and openness has knocked the ground from under the feet of the diverse radio "voices" and press hacks. They have been left with nothing but futile crystal gazing. The most sensational cooked-up "facts," often accompanied by fantastic commentaries, cannot interest readers and listeners nearly as much as the true picture of life in our country, of the people and the world at large presented by our journals, newspapers, radio and television programmes. That is why the purveyors of anti-Soviet propaganda are far more anxious than anyone else to undermine the Party's policy of democratization and openness, to halt, retard, reverse the process of renewal. They are seriously alarmed at the sharp decline, despite the fact that the BBC is no longer jammed, in the number of listeners to the various "voices." Why spend money on jamming when openness has proved much more effective.

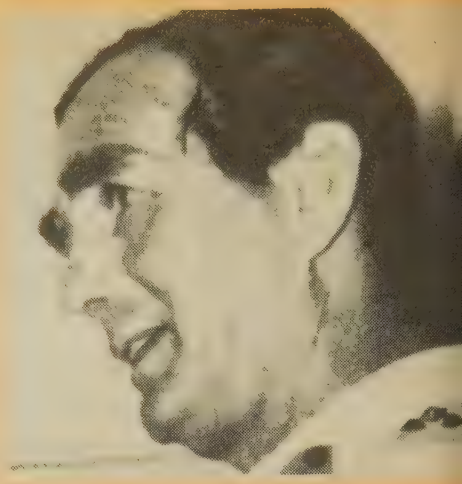
Today there is a clearly defined demarcation line between those who welcome our reforms, who are interested in strengthening relations with our country and in building world peace and those who would like to exhaust the U.S.S.R. economically, through the arms race in the hope of compelling us to take steps damaging to the economy and to the constructive tasks of building socialism. The restructuring has become something of a touchstone also for former Soviet citizens who have chosen to leave their native land. The renewal in our country is opposed (not surprisingly) both by the so-called "conservatives" among them, the votaries of the old order, and by those who until recently posed as ultra-innovators. Both categories are now bringing grist to one and the same mill.

Incidentally, lack of information played into the hands of the foreign purveyors of lying propaganda. No small role was played here also by the striving inherent in the bureaucratic mentality to grow as many forbidden fruits as possible. One cannot but recall in this connection the excellent definition of bureaucracy given at the beginning of this century by the German Chancellor Prince von Bülow. "Bureaucracy," he wrote, "is always behind with needed reforms, is distinguished by the extreme narrowness of its aspirations, suffers from political clumsiness and displays a constant tendency to interfere in the personal lives of citizens. By its policy of pinpricks it only irritates the population to no purpose and creates the soil for opposition."

Nothing can be more instructive for those who drool with pleasure at the thought of the West than to see with their own eyes the foreign lands "flowing with milk and honey" and to experience themselves the much-vaunted "freedoms" and the crime, unemployment and social inequality that are rife in their shadow. As for those who are aching to leave their native land, it is probably time to say "good riddance." And to advise them, before they go, to take another look at the American

Brigadier (Ret.), Britain, MICHAEL HARBOTTLE, reflects on how new political and military thinking could assist the process of global security and stability

Time to put the horse before the cart



"The nuclear powers must overstep the nuclear shadows and enter a nuclear-free world, thus ending the alienation of politics from the accepted norms of human ethics.... To humanize international relations there have to be appropriate actions in the humanitarian field, notably in the exchange of information, human contacts, professional exchanges, etc. This will help to create guarantees for peace...." General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev uttered these words in his address to the Moscow international forum For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Mankind on February 16, 1987.

If we are to overstep our nuclear shadows we have to revise our attitudes and reassess the perceptions we have of each other. We have first to dispel the myths which have for too long governed our thinking about defence and security and have fostered the enemy image which has so obsessed us. Then we must abandon the stereotype belief that it is the possession of weapons which gives us the only sure guarantee of peace.

Humanizing of our relations means exactly what it implies. Only through the opening of human contacts and the breaking down of barriers that impede such contacts can we hope to achieve the humanization of relations. Our hopes and fears for the future are no different whether we live in the East or West, North or South. We all share the common vision of a peaceful world in which we can live in harmony with one another. But unless we learn to live together as human beings we shall, in Martin Luther King's words, "perish together as fools."

For most of the 42 years since the end of World War II Europe has been divided into two camps. It has suffered from a political and military eyeball to eyeball confrontation structured on an ever increasing capability in nuclear weapons. Some claim that it is because of this that we have "lived in peace in Europe" throughout this period. Anyone who has lived through this time of tension and distrust will know how misleading is that claim. We have not enjoyed peace, nor shall we so long as we put our faith in weapons, nuclear and conventional, as the single ensurance against war. Clearly the time is now to take up the challenge thrown down by Mikhail Gorbachev, to embrace the new thinking and cast off the old stereotypes which have made us de-

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Michael Harbottle is a member of the Generals for Peace and Disarmament. This group, set up in 1981, unites former high-ranking officers from nine NATO countries. The group's coordinating bureau is situated in London.

TV film about former Soviet citizens shown recently on Soviet television.

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A few words about history. It seems to me that our historical science lags far behind literature and the arts in depicting the heroic and tragic pages in the history of our country and our Party. History cannot be seriously studied or taught without access to original source material. I have always been keenly interested in history, and indeed I wanted to become a historian. Knowing this, an American colleague of mine once presented me with a book entitled "Page One," a collection of facsimile reproductions of the most important front pages of The New York Times for the years 1920-75. A fascinating and instructive book! It clearly revealed, for instance, how disproportionately little coverage was given in the United States to the decisive contribution made by the Soviet armed forces to the defeat of nazi Germany. Would it not be in place for us to have a similar book?

The files of many of our newspapers and journals are well-nigh crumbling with age, and libraries are now reluctant to lend them out. Here is where a book like "Page One" would come in very handy. The stenographic reports of congresses, too, are not easily available. It is difficult to overestimate the tremendous educational value these living pages of history could have for the youth. And how instructive a warning would be the republication of the stenographic record of the August 1948 session of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Agricultural Sciences which branded genetics as a "pseudoscience" and set the development of Soviet biology back decades.

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But to return from history to the events of the past year. There are some "know-alls" who keep count of all its disasters —Chernobyl and the Admiral Nakhimov, the loss of the atomic submarine, the coal mine explosion, and the avalanches—and see them as proof that if anything has changed in our country it is for the worse. No, it is not that there are more disasters, but that there is more honest and frank information about them and, had there been such openness before, there would be less negligence and fewer disasters today.

pendent upon policies and strategies which inevitably have escalated the arms race and made us less rather than more secure.

Change is never easy, particularly where security is concerned. But new military thinking is every bit as important as new political thinking. At the Stockholm Conference on European Security and Cooperation last year a limited breakthrough was achieved in respect of exchange of information and monitoring of military manoeuvres. Any breakthrough is significant, however peripheral, but the Stockholm agreements need to be complemented by more imaginative initiatives.

Since the pattern of military negotiations has been largely centred on balance or parity in weapons and manpower there has been little room in these negotiations for bolder steps. Nor has there been any real consideration of alternative concepts of defence systems.

Armies exist for the purpose of defending the realm, but are equipped to fulfil an offensive rather than a defensive role. "Offence is the best form of defence" is a well-known military doctrine. Today that doctrine is no longer valid because the nuclear weapons of war are all-destroying.

There is, however, a new concept which could replace both the nuclear and conventional war strategies and could still provide a sufficient defence capability and deterrence factor to satisfy security requirements. This concept is known as Non-Provocative Defence and is based on an overwhelming anti-tank capability which would deter an armoured assault of any size. Ground forces formed into highly mobile fighting units would be equipped to react quickly to any point of attack. Sophisticated ground electronic sensor devices would be positioned to cover enemy approach routes while aerial satellites will give early warning and information of enemy buildup and movements. Aerial support for the ground forces would be provided by helicopter gunships and other short-range missile-carrying aircraft. There would be no deep counter-penetration forces, ground or air, capable of carrying first strike or counteroffensive into the opponent's territory. Instead, a limited counterattack capability of up to 40 kilometres would exist.

The concept has much to recommend it and deserves serious consideration. As a formula it represents a revolution in military thinking which could lead to a nuclear-free Europe, since it could provide a viable defensive system at a lesser cost than is presently being spent on nuclear or traditional conventional defence.

There are other steps, less revolutionary, which could be taken within the context of European security and cooperation, e.g., joint consultations and studies by the NATO and Warsaw Treaty commands on matters of a broad military nature as well as on issues affecting global security. Parliamentarians, diplomats and now a whole cross-section of specialist and professional bodies are increasingly finding opportunities to meet and exchange views on a whole range of matters of mutual interest and concern. It could be appropriate and valuable if the military were to join in this process.

The initiative of the retired NATO Generals for Peace and Disarmament which has now been strengthened by the formation of a comparable group of retired Soviet generals and admirals, is an example of how the experience and specialist knowledge of military men can be used to contribute to the new thinking process. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland have in the past two months also formed such groups. Since 1984 meetings have been held annually in Vienna when the combined thinking of the respective generals was addressed to the pressing security issues of the time.

A reassessment of Europe's security requirements is overdue. The Vienna mutual balanced force reduction talks are now 13 years old with little progress to show for them. It would seem to be time for the terms of reference of those talks to be revised. To continue to talk about force levels and numerical strengths is unlikely to achieve tangible results. A more positive approach is needed which takes account of a reassessment of security requirements. It is possibly time that the horse should resume its proper place in the shafts at the front of the cart.

It is time a new security concept was evolved to replace the present overriding dependence on weapons. When and only when this happens will Europe acquire the security and stability it needs; and which in turn would provide the key to a greater global security and stability. ■

Unfortunately, we did not give enough thought to the great harm wrought by the habitual absence of openness. Until recently, we never carried reports of preparations for our space flights (apart from the international ones), although such preparations are clearly visible from outer space. Our seismological stations never included in the list of their observations the underground testing of nuclear weapons in the U.S.S.R. (which were reported by the seismological stations of other countries), and this gave us, the present writer included, no little trouble during discussions of the problem of the total banning of nuclear testing at various international meetings. Today, after the more than 18 months of the Soviet moratorium on all nuclear testing —that striking manifestation of our new thinking—and after the joint Soviet-American seismic experiment in the area of our testing ground near Semipalatinsk, the voices of our ill-wishers have fallen silent. One more proof that openness is a powerful factor making for a healthier international climate.

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The policy of democratization and openness, proclaimed by the 27th Congress of the CPSU and emphatically confirmed by the January (1987) plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee as the cardinal element of restructuring and renewal, is firmly based not only on the fundamental principles of socialist society, but also on analysis of the basic trends of scientific and technological progress.

The active builder of our future cannot but be conscious of the identity of his own interests with the interests of the socialist homeland, its welfare and prosperity, be it a matter of the national economy or the environment, history or cultural monuments. At the same time, he must think independently, be able to tell what is in question—just one more "order" from above or the supreme interests of the country. It is of the utmost importance that Soviet people be fully informed, that they be supplied with the maximum information systematized and thoroughly analyzed. And when people come to realize that it is precisely science that has fully substantiated the vital need both for a nuclear-free world and for a socialist society built on the principles of democratization and openness, restructuring and renewal, then—I am firmly cinvinced!—there will be not the slightest room for even a shadow of doubt as to whether science is a blessing or a disaster for humanity. ■

How the enemy image is created

An American journalist, who for several years worked in Moscow as a correspondent, once asked 40 high-school boys and girls what associations the word "Russians" evoked for them. Reds, Communists, nuclear war, cold, Siberia, "iron curtain" and enemy were some of the answers.

And here are the results of a poll conducted by the New York Times in September 1985: nearly 30 per cent of those questioned thought the United States fought against the Soviet Union in the second world war, only 14 per cent knew about the American intervention in Russia in 1918, and 46 per cent believed Americans care more about their children than Russians do. Those who have chanced to find themselves in remote parts of the United States know that ordinary Americans experience genuine surprise at learning that Russians are like themselves.

This is what Americans think of Russia, a nation which, together with the United States, is responsible for the future of mankind. The latter circumstance makes the enemy image an important issue in present-day international relations, and not a matter of exclusive concern to Americans.

Apropos of enemies

The enemy image is not a purely American phenomenon. People have always created it. Detaching himself from concrete political situations, American philosopher Sam Keen singled out several recurrent features ascribed by people to their enemies in different periods. The enemy is always enigmatic, different. The enemy is aggressive, faceless, depersonalized. The enemy is a godless barbarian, a brutal and greedy creature always ready to perpetrate a crime. The enemy is a butcher and an oppressor.

Such a portrayal of the enemy is also typical of Washington, though here there are specific features as American ideology has from the outset been messianic and imbued with the idea of "exclusiveness." The continent was settled by people persecuted in Europe for their religious beliefs who came to America in the hope of building a just society in accordance with the commandments of the Lord.

Hence the traditionally moralistic impulse of U.S. policy, the desire to view political and international conflicts in terms of ethics, as the struggle between good and evil.

The Indians, Mexicans, Japanese, Germans, Koreans, Chinese and Vietnamese have at different times been absolute enemies of the United States. Today the Iranians and Libyans head the list. However, the notion of the Soviet Union as the enemy has its own distinctive features.

Since 1917 Bolshevism has been depicted as an evil threatening American values, civilization and Christianity. Over this period most of the former enemies have become "friends" (the Japanese and West Germans), a "friendly nation" (the Chinese), or have to a large extent left the centre of the stage (the Vietnamese).

The main factor in shaping the image of the enemy (other than Russian) is usually a real conflict that in one way or another affects ordinary Americans. For instance, the United States has fought both Germany and Japan. A hate campaign against Iran began not after the shah had been deposed (a geostrategic defeat for the United States) but after a group of Americans had been taken hostage in Teheran. The Libyans are strongly associated with terrorism, that is, the deaths of American citizens. The conflict with China started with the U.S. intervention in Korea which Chinese volunteers fought to repulse.

The attitude of Americans to the Soviet Union is largely influenced by the clash of ideologies rather than the clash of political and, even less so, economic interests. The Soviet Union and the United States have never fought each other. It may be said that when, especially in the postwar years, the real danger of an armed conflict arose, it was almost certainly engendered by fallacious, distorted ideas about the intentions of the other side.

It was mainly the difference in ideologies that provided conditions for the shaping and maintaining of the enemy image in the public consciousness. Viewed from the ideological angle, the Soviet Union embodies much that is alien to the American way of

Cartoon by Nikolai Shcherbakov

thinking. The United States is profoundly religious while the Soviet Union is an atheist nation. The United States is an individualist while the Soviet Union is a collectivist society. Americans treat the state with suspicion whereas the Soviet people identify with the state. Furthermore, some episodes in Soviet history—deviations from democratic standards—are seen by Americans as confirmation of their unfavourable ideas of the Soviet Union, and the relationship between the state and the individual in particular.

But is there a direct connection between the ideological rejection of socialism as a system and, for example, the notion that Russians care about their children less than Americans do? After all, many instances can be cited to show that the United States has maintained good relations with very different societies (take, for example, its present relations with socialist China). Moreover, the Soviet Union, too, has not always been regarded by the United States as an enemy. Wartime cooperation and the early years of détente can be recalled here. There are many Americans who are acutely critical of the Soviet Union and do not accept its socio-political system but, nevertheless, do not represent Soviet people as individuals divested of human qualities. In other words, the creation of the enemy image is advantageous to certain political groups.

Common sense vs hatred

Who is creating the image of the Soviet Union as the enemy, and manipulating this image? A fairly precise description of these forces has been given by British historian Edward Thompson. "There is now a war movement in Washington and in London," he writes. "It is made up of a) particular military-industrial interest groups—searching for bases, fossil fuels, new

weapons, markets for arms; b) New Right ideologues and publicists, and c) the confrontational rhetoric and policies of populist politicians of the right. The climate thus engendered is sheltering nakedly militarist adventures and interventions, legitimated within the cant of cold-war apologetics."

Since the McCarthy era there has not been such anti-Soviet hysteria, and whipping up of open hatred for the Soviet Union as is to be witnessed in the United States today. The humiliating images of Soviet citizens constantly shown on the screen are now used even in commercial advertising. Yet in the 1970s there seemed to have come a period when, despite the many real, and not artificially created contradictions, relations between the two countries had stabilized, and when, by way of trial and error and through cooperation, they had more or less determined the limits of the possible and the impossible in their dealings with each other, and had even learned to some extent (though this is not always openly stated) to take account of each other's vital interests. In any case—and this should be emphasized—there are no contradictions between the Soviet Union and the United States that can be resolved by a continued arms buildup.

The present arsenals are clearly more than enough for deterrence, and hardly anyone thinks seriously of dealing a first strike. Moreover, the continuing arms race is creating far more problems than it is resolving. It is gradually replacing political problems with military ones, leaving less and less room for political solutions. Little by little, Americans at different levels are beginning to realize this, as is evidenced by the unprecedented growth of the peace movement.

Meanwhile, the military-industrial complex and certain political circles are interested in the arms buildup come what may. People like Caspar Weinberger, whose job it is to ensure national security, are much more interested in seeing the Soviet Union as a threat than otherwise. They rest easier in their beds when the Soviet Union conducts nuclear tests and modernizes its nuclear weapons directed against the United States than when it does not. Hence too the desire of the militarists to blow up ideological differences beyond any reasonable limit, and appeal to base instincts.

It would, of course, be an oversimplification to consider the hate campaign to have been started, and films like "Amerika" to have been produced, on orders from above. It is sufficiently evident, however, that the skilful and determined efforts of the opponents of détente, their manipulation of the enemy image and placing of the blame for American problems at home and abroad on the Soviet Union have created such a political, ideological and cultural climate in the country that even the most primitive anti-Sovietism has become commercially profitable.

This directly influences the prospects for Soviet-American relations. Many Americans agree in the main with the expression President Reagan likes to repeat: nations distrust each other not because they are arming; they are arming because they distrust each other. In other words, they consider nuclear weapons an inevitable evil, a guarantee of security in the face of an aggressive and strong enemy, and they want trust first and disarmament second.

Is there any hope that the level of anti-Sovietism in the public consciousness will drop? There are, I think, several encouraging factors here. First of all, hostile feeling cannot remain heated indefinitely. The frantic hate campaign carries the seeds of its own degeneration. For instance, the overtly malicious character of press reports on the Chernobyl disaster aroused mass discontent in the United States. Lastly, the opposition elite seeking to conclude an arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union is expressing concern.

In the past few years scholars have been seriously discussing problems of mutual perception. To judge from press reports, the universities have noticeably increased the number of lectures on the Soviet Union, and interest in the Russian language and Soviet studies has risen. Peace activists in remote parts of the country are proposing a great many schemes designed to restore a human face to Soviet citizens in the eyes of Americans. If this trend becomes widespread, it may be an effective means of ousting the enemy image.

ALEXEI PANKIN

RIPOSTE

A "DIALOGUE" BEHIND BARS

They met in Rome's Rebibbia jail late last April. By "they" I mean six condemned Italian Red Brigade terrorists and three anti-Reds: Vladimir Bukovsky, Vladimir Maximov and Leonid Plyushch. Bukovsky and Maximov are now president and executive director respectively of the anti-communist organization the International of Resistance with headquarters in Paris. They paid a visit to the Italian prison at the terrorists' invitation. The background to the meeting is as follows.

Last March, the International of Resistance published an anti-Soviet letter in Le Figaro attacking the process of renewal now under way in the U.S.S.R. To the IR's complete amazement, the letter was reprinted by the paper Moscow News. At the same time, New Times gave its readers (in issue No. 14, 1987) a detailed account of the organization's aims and character, the real authorship of the letter and the names of those who by all indications had simply let the writers have the use of their signatures. In mid-April Bukovsky, Maximov and Plyushch, then in Rome, hatched a "reply" in the shape of a new statement, a virtual carbon copy of the first one. They simply had nothing new to say. The president, the director and Plyushch had misguidedly taken the publications in the Soviet press for a "dialogue."

Yet a dialogue did take place—in a Rome jail, with Red Brigade extremists doing time there (the agency ANSA describes them as "repentant"). "We are privileged to be in the same class as you," the Rebibbia inmates wrote in their letter of invitation to the IR visitors. The latter willingly accepted the invitation and called on the convicts soon after the Rome press conference. It was a "touching meeting," ANSA reports. The prisoners called the guests their "spiritual mentors." It was decided to carry on the dialogue and even "organize joint activities in the future." What sort of activities? Raids on banks that do business with the U.S.S.R.? "The dissidents admitted," ANSA reports, "that they were also tempted to resort to violence sometimes." Sometimes? In his book "Letters from Traveller," written abroad, Bukovsky complained of "there being strikingly few terrorist attempts in the U.S.S.R."

Be that as it may, this interesting experiment in Western democracy should not pass unnoticed. Both participants and organizers of this "international terrorist seminar" should be complimented on making fresh contacts and, most importantly, on having selected an appropriate venue for the event.

MIKHAIL PUTINKOVSKY

P.S. In their Rome statement Bukovsky, Maximov and Plyushch voiced their displeasure at New Times calling them "CIA stooges." There was no such phrase in our article. But if the cap fits...

Workers elect their own factory manager

BORIS KOZLOV, our special correspondent

The car kept me waiting, and I feared I was hopelessly late for the appointment. A clock was striking seven when we finally made it to the gate of the spinning mill.

I didn't find Maria in her office: elections for the post of mill director were already in progress in the conference room.

For and against

The problem of factory self-management was first considered in Bulgaria at the end of the sixties. What matters can workers handle on their own? The answers, however vague, boiled down to the simple truth that self-management would bring results only if the factories were made 100 per cent independent economically.

Being socialist property, capital goods are state-owned from the legal standpoint. In fact, machine tools are operated by factory workers; so why not make the work collective responsible for them? Why not leave it to the work collective to handle the problems connected with production and to run the risks involved? Why not make it free to use the factory's profits at its discretion? In that case, state bodies, both managing and planning, would only reserve those functions and rights that are outside the work collective's jurisdiction. But in these circumstances will the links between the state and the work collective survive? They will, but not in the form of administrative fetters and instructions as to what is to be done and when. The state and the work collective will cooperate in outlining the factory's or industry's development strategy, analyzing the market situation, price setting and looking for sources of raw material.

Kosta Andreyev explained all this to me with a considerable feeling. He knew from experience how hard the problems involved are to deal with. The effort properly to delimit the rights of the state and the work collective, lasting for five years, had never been carried through, he told me. The nut had proved too hard to crack.

What further complicated matters was that a generation of centralized administration fiends had emerged in the country who doggedly stuck to moribund methods of management. They restricted the work collectives' rights by injunction, brought direct pressure to bear on the workers, and even tried to interfere with the very process of reform. The result was a clash—unexpected in the socialist economy—between two elements stemming from the same root.

"We were driven to despair at times," Andreyev said. "The psychological climate in which the former administrative structure had emerged was in need of radical changes. Previously, the factory manager looked to the higher organization, which had 'fostered' him, for instructions. Now it's different. The director has to draw upon the experience and wisdom of the work collective whose performance decides the factory's—and the director's—fate. This practice was not to everybody's liking. There was talk that the party had adopted the policy of laissez-faire towards personnel, that it might lose control over it and over social process in general, and so on. Some even went so far as to warn that such a policy was fraught with the risk of loss of power."

May I, albeit belatedly, introduce Kosta Andreyev, he is Secretary of the Central Council of Bulgarian Trade Unions.

Whom to elect!

Seated at a long table in the mill's party committee room were two women: Margarita Marinova, the party secretary, and Maria Vasileva, who had just been reelected director.

Maria's hand trembled slightly as she poured the coffee: her nerves were still taut after the election meeting. What was there to be so nervous about, I wondered. After all, she had held the post for eighteen years, proved an astute leader, and gained universal respect.

Maria put her cup down and shot me a questioning glance.

"What if they blackballed me? What if the very idea of the elections is a mistake? Aren't we deliberately provoking a conflict between the collective and the management this way? If so, who stands to gain? Life is now posing unexpected, even confusing problems, which would seem so simple earlier."

The workers had discussed her candidature sincerely, honestly and impartially. Some praised her, others, irked by all sorts of shortcomings, gave her a piece of their mind. Margarita Marinova, secretary of the party committee, could stand it no longer and jumped to her feet.

"What's the idea?" she shouted. "Do you want to vote Maria out, or what?"

Maria kept silent. She had been through a lot in the years of her directorship. Taking hard knocks was all in the day's work in her position, and she had had her share of criticism in the party committee and at party conferences.

"There is a difference, though," the director told me. "Here I am criticized not as a public worker or a party member, but as a factory manager, and the critics are my colleagues, business-like people all of them, who want me to run this mill professionally enough for it to bring in profits. The changeover to self-financing has made every worker vitally interested in increasing the mill's economic efficiency, in having a director capable of making it operate at a profit. Previously, the mill worked according to plans drawn up in higher organizations by armchair administrators far removed from production."

Maria Vasileva has just been reelected director.

Photo by the author

"Do you mean that those at the top should not interfere in the management of a factory?"

"Exactly. After all, it is the workers who are directly engaged in material production, and so they are the best judges of who can manage their factory to the collective's and the state's mutual benefit. At the textile mill next door to us the workers have made their director step down because he failed to measure up to the new style of management."

"In what way does your particular factory benefit from self-financing?"

Maria sighed.

"Do you think it's easy to manage

this setup? I'm responsible for three factories—one here in Sofia, another in the east of the country, near the Turkish border, and the third some thirty kilometres west of the city.

"My problems are random and obsolete equipment and unreliable cooperating plants. The raw materials they supply make our work an ordeal.

"We need a revolution in our relations with them, as well as a revolution in technology. We want to get them really interested in our joint effort. We needed new equipment for our busiest, Sofia, factory. After we had been given a free hand, the director of our eastern factory struck a deal with the local integrated agroindustrial enterprise, whereby we spin their wool on a profit-sharing basis. Our partners lent us currency to buy new equipment for the Sofia factory in the G.D.R. The old machines were moved to the eastern branch where, with a lesser load, they perform very well. Now the eastern factory and its wool supplier function as a single unit and make a profit both for themselves and the state."

"This must be largely due to your own energy and initiative?"

"Well, the director is supposed to be forward-looking."

"Are the workers 'initiated' into the management's day-to-day affairs?"

"We keep the workers informed of all our new initiatives. The collective sees that we conceal nothing from it, and protect its interests."

In Bulgaria some believe in the inherent wisdom of the work collective which, they say, is the best judge of whether a given candidate for directorship will be able to cope with his duties. Others regard this practice as dangerous, and fear that idlers may try to use it to install "their man" in the high post. And then, why should candidates be looked for within the collective only? Can't the directors be invited from the outside? Or appointed by higher authorities?

Self-management

My hosts explained to me that one could no longer become director the old way. Elections are preceded as a rule by a competition with the entrants expected to meet exacting standards. Any citizen can offer his services to any factory which has advertized for a director in the press, or place an ad himself. His application is considered by a commission made up of workers and experts.

Supposing the commission has attracted a suitable candidate, or several of them. Usually, it picks out three prospective directors, who set out their positions and plans at a general meeting, whereupon the meeting passes the final verdict.

At Bulgarian factories, all managerial personnel—from the director to a foreman—are elected for terms of 2 to 5 years. The workers have suggested that Maria's "term of office" be extended to ten years. And this after all the criticism levelled against her! A great honour, indeed.

What if a candidate is blackballed? There have been cases of such ill-starred candidates leaving the factory to lick their wounds elsewhere. Team leaders are especially prone to react to defeat in this way.

How is a team formed? The workers elect its council at a general meeting. The council elects the team leader and delegates its representatives (one representative per ten workers) to the meeting at which the director is to be elected. The director has no right to appoint workers to a team—that is up to the collective itself.

"Self-management?"

"Yes, complete self-management. Which means that the collective bears full responsibility for its actions and for production."

What about trade unions!

The glass building of matchbox architecture, housing the Central Council of Bulgarian Trade Unions, towers in the centre of Sofia. Kosta Andreyev received me in his 14th-floor office. I asked him what the results of the factory manager election campaign were.

"It was hard going, but all our apprehensions proved in vain.... Not all the candidates got a qualifying vote, although some of them were backed by party and trade union organizations. Out of 51,000 candidates for team leaders over 1,200 failed to get through, and out of 5,500 claimants to directorship 284 dropped out, on a national scale. At the last moment, 103 of them withdrew their candidatures for fear of proving unable to meet the standards set for factory managers today.

"I think the election campaign has been a useful and enriching experience. Far from all workers realize, however, that times have changed, and that they must reassess their role in production and become its real masters. In Plovdiv recently I asked a factory worker: 'What part do you have in managing production?' 'I am not a manager,' he replied, 'I am an assembly-man. You'll find the manager in that building over there.' He must have misunderstood me but, more likely, he really thought it was no concern of his."

The reassessment of the relationship between the collective and the individual is a complex, sometimes painful, process. Renovation has polarized the nation into innovators and conservatives. The former regard this process as a source of new strength, and the latter as a threat. But the important thing is that self-management helps establish new links between man and society.

Trade unions are also coming to play a substantially different role. The recent congress of this biggest mass organization of the Bulgarian working people has shown that the republic's trade unions are getting directly involved in managing economic affairs. The changeover to factory self-management has given them specific new problems that come strictly within their terms of reference, and call for expert solutions. The problems include new production quotas, wage policy, assessing factories' assets and profit-labour input correlation. What complicates matters is that Bulgarian trade unions have never dealt with such problems before and, consequently, lack the necessary experience.

In short, they have their hands full.

* * *

Kosta Andreyev and I talked for over an hour. I thought of those who had appointments with him during that hour and said I was sorry he had kept them waiting because of me.

Kosta smiled.

"Until recently they did come crowding in, candidates for factory directorships mostly. Some suggested building a new factory canteen quickly, others—a palace of culture or a holiday hotel. 'Why now, of all times? Hasn't this occurred to you before?' I asked them. No answer. Well, I knew the answer all right: they wanted to impress the workers before the elections."

I looked out into the anteroom: it was empty.

"Where are they? Have they built their canteens and palaces of culture already?"

"Hardly," Kosta replied. "But they no longer have to ask anyone's permission to do so."

Sofia—Moscow

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Red flags in Times Square

Ivan Samuilov recalls

Ten days that shook the world is John Reed's oft-quoted classic formula for the Russian Revolution of 1917. Those days still evince keen interest from historians. But eyewitness accounts of the events of the period are every bit as interesting as the results of historical research.

One such eyewitness was Ivan Samuilov. He has lived an unusual life. Born in 1900 to a peasant family in Smolensk area, he left for the U.S.A. with his parents in 1904. It was in the U.S.A. that he spent his childhood and youth and became involved in the struggle for social justice. He returned to Russia in 1921, as a mature man. Under the lining of his coat he carried papers signed by Charles Ruthenberg, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States. So he returned to his motherland, forever. He contributed actively to the building of socialism and took part in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45. After the war he took part in rebuilding Smolensk from the ruins. He became manager of an important factory.

Ivan Samuilov remembers his life in America well. We have asked him to share his memories with our readers.

Ivan Samuilov.
Photo by D. Ukhtomsky

Memory plays strange tricks on us. Sometimes one doesn't remember recent events but those of the distant past come back clearly. Nobody ever forgets his youth. When they show New York on television I see myself as a ten-year-old boy in shorts selling newspapers in Brooklyn. I am in a hurry because I have to be at school by nine.

At seventeen, my father took me to a Socialist Party rally devoted to the Russian revolution. As we walked people carrying little red flags passed us. Times Square was crowded. Speakers succeeded each other on a makeshift rostrum. They spoke of Russia and the need for class unity. I recognized one of the speakers: he was Alexei Begun, from Byelorussia, a former lodger at my father's house.

"The Bolsheviks and Lenin want peace," said Begun. These words were greeted with a storm of applause: the Americans had already had a taste of war. There were black ribbons on some windows which meant that a member of the family had died in the war.

After the rally I joined the Socialist Party, and became a member of its sixth, Russian, section.

I remember a packed auditorium in New York in January 1919. There was a strange hush over the audience. People were listening in rapt silence to a lean man in a dark suit. He took us in our imaginations to Russia, thousands of miles away. Americans were very interested in the country. Who better to tell them about it than a man who had visited Russia, talked with Lenin?

When John Reed had finished and people had begun to disperse I plucked up my courage and approached him. I introduced myself.

"A Russian?" John Reed raised an eyebrow.

"Yes."

We talked for about an hour. He turned out to be an amiable and charming man.

"How is life over there?" I asked him.

"Life is hard, it's difficult to build a new life," said John Reed frankly. "It's hard but exciting."

And then he sprang a question on me:

"Are you thinking of going back yourself?"

How was I to answer? Of course I dreamed of returning. But I had no chance at the time. An opportunity presented itself a year later, under dramatic circumstances.

My formative years

I had not joined the labour movement on an impulse. It was a difficult decision prompted by the life my family led in America. Before settling in New York we had lived in grimy Morrisville, Pennsylvania, where my father worked in a mine. Then we moved to Greensburg. Father suffered another setback there and was fired. Then we moved to New York. There things seemed to be looking up. Father got himself a job as a house-painter with a building contractor who was of Russian origin. At last we had enough to eat: white corn bread, potato soup and a pint of milk for six.

My family had other interests besides feeding themselves. At home there was constant talk of the Industrial Workers of the World, and the speeches of its leader William Haywood (Big Bill). I never dreamed that years later Haywood would come to the Soviet Union and I would meet him personally.

What sort of an organization was the IWW? Father explained to me, then a boy of eleven: "It is a militant alliance of American workers to defend the interests of the very poor." "That means our interests too?" "Yes, so, you understand everything."

Of course I didn't really understand much at the time. True awareness came later, when I finished school and at sixteen became a milling machine operator at a toolmaking plant. I learned the rudiments of my trade quickly and started earning 25 dollars a week, not bad at my age.

After a while I had to leave the plant. I was blacklisted for taking part in a strike. There was no question of getting a job with a major enterprise: employers passed on the names of striking workers. I had to settle for a driver's job with a small transport firm. Thank God I could drive.

For all that, I have the happiest memories of that time. I felt myself an equal among equals and was proud of being trusted. I helped my father carry out Party assignments and after November 1917 began to be given jobs of my own. I was involved in preparing for demonstrations, distributing leaflets, explaining the rights of workers and telling the truth about Soviet Russia. There was nothing illegal about that. Such activities were not banned

by the U.S. Constitution. Before long, however, it was brought home to me forcibly that the constitutional articles protecting the rights of the individual in the U.S. aren't worth the paper they are written on.

The Palmer raids

We celebrated the new year of 1920 in our club. The whole 6th Russian section of the U.S. Communist Party, formed in the autumn of 1919 from the breakaway left wing of the Socialists, attended the celebration, with their relatives and friends. We had a good time, danced and sang. In short, the atmosphere was festive.

Not a word was uttered that evening about business. We arranged to discuss our urgent problems the following day. If my memory is not deceiving me, we were to discuss assistance to strikers at a tannery. On January 2, however, the meeting had no sooner begun, than police broke into the auditorium.

"Women are requested to leave! Men get up and line up against the wall!" the officer snapped.

Police vans were waiting outside. "Out," repeated the officer. There was clamour in our midst: "We are not criminals! We're free citizens! It's a free country!" But they didn't stand on ceremony with us. I was shoved into a police van along with some twenty other men. The vans made a U-turn and started along Brooklyn Bridge. Some of those arrested began to sing the "Whirlwinds of Danger," and dozens of voices joined in.

I was summoned for interrogation about four hours later. They took me to a small room that seemed totally dark, probably because of the blinding light directed right at me.

"John Samuiloff," said a voice from the darkness on my left. "Tell us who is your president?"

"We've got no president."

"You're lying, there were 200 people in the club. Who organized the meeting?" said another voice to my right.

I answered as we had agreed:

"We read an announcement in a paper."

"What paper?"

"The New World. All the Russian community reads it."

"He's trying to fool us!"

They started beating me. I tried to cover my face with my hands. The light fell on my bandaged index finger which I had hurt in the workshop.

"I'll make you talk." The interrogator seized my bad finger, twisted it until blood started oozing from the bandage, and shook the blood from his palm. I almost fainted. I no longer heard the hoarse voices of the policemen. I had to stick it out. Little did I know that about seven hundred people had been arrested that night in New York without any grounds. And not in New York alone. FBI agents raided meetings, offices and private flats in 70 American cities from coast to coast.

This marked the start of an action that went down in history books as the Palmer raids after the then Attorney General Mitchell A. Palmer. The man directly responsible for the raids was John Edgar Hoover, his special assistant. Hoover would later be head of the FBI.

John Reed speaking. Drawing by an American artist.

As we learned later, about 10,000 Americans were arrested between January 2 and 6, 1920. Most of them were ordinary workers in steel and copper plants, carpenters and house-painters, printers, waiters, drivers, mechanics and shoe-makers. They were detained for long periods on the mere suspicion of "subversive activities." This was the price American workers had to pay for their sympathy for the Russian revolution.

The following day at about eleven in the morning we were taken in police vans to the piers on the south side of Manhattan. It was from there that ferries went to Ellis Island, "the island of tears," as those who passed through the immigration centre called it. We were jailed. We were taken for walks in a vast hall from which on clear days we could see the Statue of Liberty.

At first we didn't believe they would detain us for long: after all, we hadn't broken any laws. But after about five days it became clear that the authorities were in no hurry to release us. We decided to call a hunger strike.

In the evening, we were led as usual to the refectory. About two hundred people were seated at a long table. That evening none of us touched the bread and margarine and the swill that passed for soup.

"What's the matter? What does this mean?" yelled the warden. "D'you think you're on vacation?" We handed him an envelope: "Everything is explained here."

Our demands were to be allowed visits by relatives, given defence lawyers, allowed to receive parcels, and so on. Word of the hunger strike reached New York. A committee in aid of the prisoners was set up. Newspapers carried headlines asking, "Why Are People on Ellis Island Fasting?" Presently we were told that the authorities were ready to meet all our demands. You can imagine how jubilant we were.

Home, home!

It was not until six months later that we were released. We were to be brought to trial, but that did not bother us. I felt that now that I was free it would be easy to fight for our rights. I was wrong.

I was subpoenaed in December. Three judges grilled me with questions as to whether I was familiar with the leaflets containing Lenin's "Letter to American Workers" and the documents of the Communist International. "Yes," I replied, "I know these leaflets, but show me an article in the Constitution which forbids reading and distributing them."

As it turned out, everything had been decided beforehand. My father, nine other people and I were sentenced to be deported to Russia. Later we realized what a stroke of luck it was. You see, we had never taken American citizenship and were technically foreign nationals. Other comrades were less fortunate. They were sentenced to between five and ten years in jail.

At last we sailed for Russia. We were taken to Cherbourg and thence, for some reason, to Liverpool, and then on to London and via Hull to Lepaya and Riga. Throughout the journey we were shadowed by plainclothes FBI agents.

From Riga we went by train to the Ostrov station in Pskov Region. There we were officially turned over to the Soviet representatives. But it was only later, when we arrived in Pskov that I felt I was really home. We were taken to a rally and I addressed a crowd of many thousands of people. Amazingly, each of my sentences, uttered in broken Russian, was greeted with applause.

...When today I hear Western politicians sounding off about "genuine" democracy I can't help thinking about my ordeal in American jails and interrogation by the police in Manhattan. I still have the marks of that interrogation on my body.

Recorded by BORIS BALKAREI

Irangate—the Israeli connection

EVGENY KORSHUNOV

Early in 1986, the London weekly The Observer carried a noteworthy article under the headline "The Blooming of Operation Flower." Although it passed almost unnoticed at the time, the article is now seen as a harbinger of what later came to be known as Irangate.

The article opens in the style of a political detective story. "'You will see the firing tomorrow. You'll enjoy it. It's a very impressive piece of machinery,' Ezer Weizman, then Israeli Defence Minister, told his Iranian colleague Hassan Toufanian. The two senior generals were meeting at the Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv on July 18, 1977, to finalize agreement on one of the Middle East's best-kept secrets."

The secret in question was that the Tel Aviv rulers and the Shah of Iran sought to pool their countries' efforts to create a nuclear missile of their own. The classified project was code-named Operation Flower. Iranian-Israeli cooperation in this matter was not confined to agreements and reciprocal visits. Toufanian, whose responsibilities included purchasing arms for the Iranian army, supervised the progress of Operation Flower in person.

In July 1977, Toufanian watched, in the Negev Desert, a test launching of the Iranian-Israeli missile capable of carrying a 750-kilo nuclear warhead. He liked what he saw and, back in Teheran, reported the results to the Shah, suggesting that Iran enter into a top-secret deal with Israel. Israel was to supply a billion dollars' worth of weapons in exchange for Iranian oil. The Observer is of the opinion that cooperation between the Shah's regime and the Zionist state went back to 1975, when both tried to get hold of American Pershing 1 missiles. The idea found its embodiment in Operation Flower, the most important of the six joint Iranian-Israeli military programmes, the agreements on which were signed in Teheran in 1977 by Shimon Peres, then Israel's Defence Minister. The Shah pledged himself to pay for Tel Aviv's arms deliveries in oil.

To maintain secrecy, the deal was transacted through a front company in Switzerland. The Iranian side made its first instalment in the form of $260 million worth of oil, but Operation Flower went no further than that: shortly afterwards the Shah was overthrown and fled the country.

As the years went by, no one recalled the operation, although experts associate it with Israel's development of the missile of a new type.

No surprise

Whereas official Washington's involvement in Irangate came as a surprise to many in the West, Israel's did not, for Tel Aviv had always worked in harness with Washington in all its Middle East ventures. Long before the scandal broke out, reports on "mysterious" businessmen supplying "mysterious" cargoes to Iran in "mysterious" ways had cropped up intermittently in the world press. The New York Times revealed this activity as American arms deliveries through "private channels." In 1983-85, the paper wrote, American jet fighters were supplied to Iran by international arms traders with the Pentagon's knowledge. Iran acquired as many as 39 warplanes in this way! Some of the traders confidentially informed the U.S. government of the illegal deals, which, nevertheless, were allowed to continue because the military hoped to use them as a means of obtaining intelligence information, some of it on Iran.

In 1981, the Associated Press made Israel's secret deliveries of American weapons to Iran public knowledge. Then, too, the deliveries were made through the agency of the Israeli secret services which had close links with the CIA. The weapons, including ground-to-ground and ground-to-air missiles, were shipped to Iran via West European ports. Antwerp and Zeebrugge, for instance, handled $135 million worth of Iran-bound weapons. The Brussels Le Soir furnished evidence of Danish, Belgian, F.R.G., Dutch, Swedish and Portuguese companies having been involved in these arms deliveries. Besides American weapons, those manufactured in NATO member countries and Israel were supplied to Iran.

In April 1986, U.S. customs officials detained—unaware of the ensuing consequences—a respectable-looking F.R.G. businessman in New York. He turned out to be party to a $2.5 billion contract under which American weapons (fighter planes, missiles and tanks included) were to have been smuggled out to Iran with Israel's cooperation, again through third countries. Five F.R.G. and British "suspects" were reported to have been arrested in New York, and five of their accomplices found themselves behind bars in Bermuda, including three Israelis, one of them a retired general. Samuel Evans, a London-based U.S. lawyer, was named as the leader of this contraband organization (the American media referred to the detainees as "smugglers"). Curiously, the arrest of the "smugglers" was presented as a triumph of the U.S. federal authorities which had uncovered a big underground organization planning illicit arms sales to Iran.

Things had not yet gone as far as Irangate, although many were beginning to smell a rat. The retired general declared with soldierly bluntness that Israeli top brass knew of his activity and threatened to "talk" if Israel failed to stand up for him.

This had an immediate effect. Having interviewed "all the officials who might have sanctioned such an operation," Director-General of Israel's Defence Ministry came up with a statement on behalf of his ministry to the effect that Israel had nothing to do with this affair either directly or indirectly and those involved in the collusion acted on their own behalf.

Outraged, the smuggler general and his accomplices began to vie with each other disclosing their connections with the heads of U.S. munitions concerns and in the top government echelons both in Israel and the U.S. However, they did not give the White House away for the time being, and the latter took advantage of this.

"This affair pivots on Israel's role in it," an American TV commentator said at the time. "Israel has been accused of helping Iran before, because it considers Iraq more dangerous. And although Israel denies its involvement, American officials say they are not too sure it is in the clear."

Mind you, nothing is refuted or

admitted. They are not too sure, that's all.

Old connections

But let us go back to 1981. After the Iran arms sale scandal known as Irangate had broken out, British papers suddenly remembered the headquarters of the Iranian National Petrochemical Company in Victoria Street, London. The company had been established by the Shah of Iran "to handle the purchase of equipment for the country's oil industry." This was not its only function, however. The London Daily Telegraph obtained possession of documents proving that by 1981 there already existed in London "a ready and available network" by means of which American weapons were smuggled out to Iran, with Israeli agents having a hand in it.

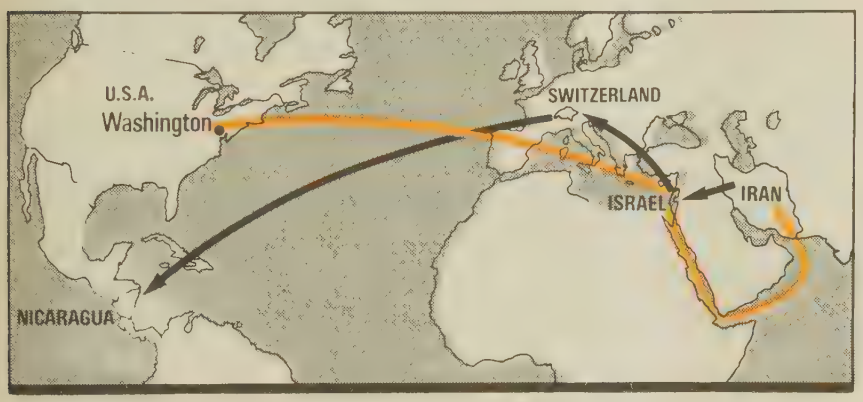
Jacob Nimrodi, an agent of the Israeli intelligence service Mossad and owner of the International Desalination Equipment Co., was the chief mediator. He signed a £47 million deal in London in 1981. This Israeli intelligence officer is a key figure in the Irangate affair.

Another key figure is David Kimche, also a Mossad agent of long standing who later became a diplomat (in line with the Israeli secret services' tradition) and held the post of Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. He maintained links with Iran for years and, of course, used the services of Mossad agents in Iran.

It came to The Daily Telegraph's knowledge that Jacob Nimrodi and David Kimche were the very men who at the end of 1985 and the beginning of 1986 had a series of meetings in London with Robert McFarlane, assistant to the U.S. President for national security, and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council. The meetings had been attended by Manucher Ghorbanifar, an "Iranian entrepreneur." McFarlane complained later that Kimche had let him down by introducing Ghorbanifar as a "political figure" and a man connected with the Iranian Prime Minister and with the Speaker of the Majlis. That McFarlane trusted Kimche was hardly surprising: American secret services had often relied on Mossad for information. This time, however, Israeli intelligence agents cheated their American friends, as follows from McFarlane's statements contained in the Irangate report by the Select Senate Intelligence Committee published, in part, at the end of January 1987. "If I had known then what I know now I would never have suggested we get involved with him," McFarlane said, meaning Ghorbanifar. What McFarlane came to know was that Ghorbanifar figured in CIA files as a drug trafficker who combined his business with espionage, and had the reputation of a man not to be trusted. A CIA man who had met Ghorbanifar in Iran "was horrified" to learn that the Israeli secret service had recommended Ghorbanifar to the Americans. But why not presume that while cheating the CIA Ghorbanifar, a double agent, did honest work for Mossad?

In any case, Ghorbanifar tried, in his own way, to save his sponsors' face by heaping accusations on the CIA. They [the CIA—E.K.] had to do something, he said in an NBC interview. They had to find someone to shift the blame to. They tried to shift it to me. It was they who'd got the Americans into this mess. They wanted a bait, he went on, adding that he was not going to be one. Ghorbanifar threatened to testify in public to the U.S. Select Senate Intelligence Committee or other bodies investigating the Irangate scandal. After that, the Israeli agent was left alone.

Nevertheless, some of Tel Aviv's men in Washington have been affected by Irangate. For instance, the resignation of Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defence, was announced early in February 1987. Perle stayed on, though, but his active involvement in the arms deliveries to Iran very nearly cost him his job then.



Irangate. The coloured line shows the U.S. arms delivery route to Iran, and the black line, the route by which funds were supplied to Nicaraguan contras.

From Newsweek (U.S.A.)

A butting scapegoat

The record of Washington initial confusion at the Irangate exposé and its attempts to put all the blame on Tel Aviv could make a real thriller. Take the above-mentioned report by the Select Senate Intelligence Committee, for instance. The U.S. was clearly in no hurry to publish it. The NBC TV company was the first somehow to come on a draft of it and make it public. An NBC correspondent reported from the Pentagon on January 10, 1987: According to the testimony given at the Select Senate Intelligence Committee, the Iran initiative was born in Jerusalem, and each time it stumbled the Israeli leaders helped it up again. Michael Ledeen, a Middle East expert and a former consultant of the National Security Council, returned from Israel in the spring of 1985, bringing along a plan for reaching Teheran through an Iranian go-between, known to Israeli arms merchants. McFarlane, the former assistant to the President for national security, endorsed the plan which would make the exchange of arms for hostages possible in the long run.... It was pointed out in the report that Israel and Ghorbanifar were getting the U.S. ever more deeply involved in the Iran arms deal, because Israel was interested in the Iran-Iraq war continuing. Israel has been secretly selling arms to Iran since 1980, because the war is in the interests of its national security and its munitions industry, the report went on. In December 1985, after all the lines of approach over a six months' period had

got them nowhere, McFarlane advised President Reagan to stop the "Iran initiative." In January (1986—E.K.) Shimon Peres, the then Prime Minister of Israel, sent his spokesman Amiram Nir to Washington with a view to reviving the hostage-for-arms swap scheme. That worked. Later, Lieutenant Colonel North told Attorney General Meese that at the January meeting Nir had suggested using part of the arms sales proceeds to finance the war in Nicaragua.

John Poindexter mentioned the "Israeli connection" in a memo to President Reagan written as early as January 17, 1986. After the White House published this document about a year later, on January 9, 1987, in an attempt to quell the scandal then in the making, Tel Aviv was enraged. Both Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres accused Washington of trying to make Israel a scapegoat.

That worked. Michael Armacost, Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, told Jossi Beilin, the Israeli Foreign Ministry Director-General, then in Washington on a visit, that no one was trying to make Israel a scapegoat. Then Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, assured the Israeli Premier on President Reagan's behalf that the White House had no intention of blaming or slandering Israel. The scapegoat proved able to butt and compelled Washington to retreat. This is what the New York Times wrote on this score: "Pleading the innocence of ignorance, Reagan administration officials blame Israel for turning them into bazaars of Teheran and the international arms market. Professing loyalty to an ally, Israeli officials blame the Reagan administration for making them scapegoats. Who led whom into sin? The right answer is both; here is a clear case of symbiotic seduction. For many years, [U.S. and Israel] each have had reason to seek an Iranian opening. Both rated Iran as the premier strategic prize in the Middle East."

Hence Irangate. The illegal arms deal is no accident, but is a product of joint Washington's and Tel Aviv's Middle East strategy—ruthless, unprincipled and cynical.

■

Unfinished interview

Women in the Indian cinema

Formerly, it seemed to me that there is nothing more disappointing for a journalist than not having his work published. But it is even more distressing when he himself postpones completing an article on a subject in which he has become emotionally involved because of the demands of daily routine assignments, and then suddenly discovers that its thread has snapped. The thread of a human life that is cut abruptly short.

I had frequent meetings with the well-known Indian film actress Smita Patil. She spoke to me about her work in the cinema. I saw several of her films. We agreed to have the concluding meeting before I wrote up my piece at the 11th Indian international festival recently held in Delhi. Alas, instead I attended a memorial retrospective screening of her films. Smita Patil died shortly before the festival, aged 31. She had made 75 films.

Write an obituary? But she survives in the characters she played on the screen. Their prototypes, Indian women from real life, refuse to accept the verdict of fate. One must try as best one can to pay tribute to the actress whose name is identified here with what is called the new Indian cinematography. A civic-minded, socially abrasive, passionate cinematography.

I met Smita for the first time some years ago in Bombay, the Indian film capital that annually produces over 600 films. For many of them, if not for most, serious film critics have devised the sardonic tag—Bombay masala. Masala is the name of an Indian condiment made from a dozen different spices. In short, a hotch-potch. The films are an escapist farrago of factitious conflicts and saccharine melodramatic scenes divorced from real social problems.

"I prefer not to play in Bombay masala," Smita Patil told me in an interview. It was a hard-won interview. At first she flatly refused. The caprice of a prize winner in many international and Indian film festivals, spoiled by the attention of the press? The whim of a member of the jury at national and international film contests? It turned out that she simply disliked giving interviews on the cinema. The same applied to autographs. Raj Kapur gave me a tip: in real life Smita is active in a women's public organization that tries to alleviate the condition of women in the Bombay slums. The ploy worked. The actress agreed to see me in this capacity. And she tried hard to divert the conversation from films to social problems. That is why, I thought at the time, Smita prefers parts whose prototypes are not ingredients for masala but characters from real Indian life, which abounds in the most improbable situations.

In the film "The Child-God" directed by Utpalendu Chakraborty, an exponent of the new Indian cinematography, she plays the role of Sita, the wife of a ruined peasant and a mother of two. Long after midnight Sita's husband returns home from the bazaar covered in blood, his clothes torn. It turns out that at the bazaar an itinerant barker urged the public to see a child-god. How else could a simple peasant regard a boy with three heads and four arms? For half a rupee the barker allowed people to touch the living deity, who supposedly absolved sins and brought people happiness. Crowds of peasants waited for the blessed moment. But suddenly Sita's husband recognized the man. He was a priest from the village where Sita's family had once lived. The same priest who some ten years before was present at the birth of her son.

Sita, it turned out, did not know that she had given birth to a freak with three heads and four arms. While she was still asleep after labour the priest persuaded her husband that the authorities would punish the couple for not rejecting the infant. So the baby became the property of the priest, who made millions out of it. Sita's husband announced at the bazaar for all to hear that he was the father of the child and demanded his share of the profits from the priest. The peasants viciously beat him up not only for laying claim to

the living deity but also for wanting to deprive them of faith in their good fortune.

So the husband demands that Sita bear him another freak. What's the use of a normal child? All it's good for is begging. As for a deformed one, it could be declared a deity and bring in thousands a day. Furious, Sita pushes her husband away. But in her mind she is already there, in the market place, to see her firstling, even if he is a freak. In her dream, and here the director cannot resist a theme beloved of Indian audiences, Sita sees herself as the goddess Kali. She appears before the priest-cum-barker, marching at the head of a solemn religious procession, and, unlike her husband who tried to strike a deal with the charlatan, slices him in two with her magic sword.

A still from the film "The Child-God."

Morning comes. The sound of the superexpress, the symbol of civilized India, recedes. And in the now silent market square the barker's voice rings out: "The child-god bestows happiness on you, only half a rupee. . . ."

Religion, Smita Patil said, to this day tenaciously holds millions of Indians in its grasp. But it is often used for selfish ends. In Punjab, for instance, it is exploited in the interests of separatism. It would seem that against the background of India's scientific and technological progress, religious obscurantism should have lost ground. But, though it might seem a paradox, the two coexist in India. Sita and her husband, as Smita saw them, represent millions of ordinary Indians whose blind faith makes them victims of religious exploitation. Is it not time for the elite of our society to emerge from their westernized enclave and look at the real India? Sita's protest in her dream will be realized if we all rally in the struggle against the suppression of the human spirit in the name of religion.

In the film "In Search of Famine" by another prominent director, Mrinal Sen, Smita had virtually to split apart, as it was a film within a film.

. . . A flashy and noisy film crew arrives in a Bengali village to shoot a film about the Bengal famine of 1943, engineered, as we know from history, by the colonial administration. A famous actress (played by Smita Patil) is to recreate the character of a Bengali peasant woman of the early 1940s. The villagers watch the denim-clad film people with perplexity. The latter, in turn, cannot find a common language with the peasants. The pampered actress from the city cannot and does not want to enter the inner world of the peasant woman she is to portray.

"The film speaks with pain about social contrasts, the gap between the masses that are in many ways still downtrodden and the 'elite,' who are whole light years away from the people," Smita told me. "Alas, the heroine of the film never gave this a thought, but I tried to act in such a way as to make audiences think. . . ."

In two films heroines played by Smita began to think: one, that her life had been meaningless and the other, that it is necessary to have an aim in life, which she eventually finds.

In Shyam Benegal's film "The Role," Smita plays Usha, a girl from a well-to-do family that has tried to protect her from everything it thought could hurt her. And so Usha entered adulthood without any knowledge not only of the concerns and worries of life, but even of the complexities of human relations. She becomes the easy prey of a tenacious producer who repays the young woman by drawing her into the illusionary world of the commercial cinema. And so Usha becomes a popular film star, flitting from one commercial film to another, thoughtlessly passing her time with directors whose creative and moral reputations are equally dubious.

But at a certain moment the actress asks herself if she has played even one worthwhile role? In her search for truth and her roots she returns to her estate where in the meantime her daughter has not only grown up but married. They fail to establish a relationship, the more so as the daughter hates commercial films, including those in which her mother plays. It is possible that Usha has had her moment of truth because, as a lesson for those like her, she wishes to play a role based on her own failed life. But there are no scripts for such a role in the commercial cinema. . . .

On the other hand, in Jabbar Patel's film "Threshold" Smita plays a contemporary character who knows her place in life well. Sulbha, the heroine of the film, is a teacher by training and is offered a job at a women's penal colony in another city. She accepts the job despite her husband's objections. On arriving there, Sulbha finds herself in a veritable hell on earth where the sufferings of the inmates are exacerbated by the indifference and avarice of the administration. By her considerate attitude and thoughtful approach to her charges, most of whom were not so much atoning for their own sins as paying for the sins of society, she wins their confidence and brings many of them back to a human existence. Smita told me that the "Threshold" of the title should be understood as a sort of social barrier on the other side of which heartless society has placed millions of oppressed women.

Preparing for my concluding interview with Smita, which was destined never to take place, I wanted to ask her if she thought her work in cinematography had helped, if only a little, millions of Indian women in crossing the threshold of their rightless condition, the barrier of their lack of faith in their own strength and social, religious and ethic prejudices. I believe the widespread mourning that followed the news of Smita Patil's untimely death answers my question in the affirmative.

LEONID ZHEGALOV
our own correspondent

Delhi

Paul Winter: "One World"

"Have you ever heard the howl of a wolf! Or the cry of an eagle, the mating call of a stag! Oh, but of course, you're a city dweller, you hardly ever go to the country."

These unusual questions were put to me by the famous American musician Paul Winter. It was not the first time he had brought his Eco Jazz to the Soviet Union.

"At the end of the 1960s it occurred to me that we hardly know the voice of nature," he told me. "There are fewer and fewer wild animals, and many species are on the point of extinction as a result of our irrational economic activities. I once heard a recording of whale song. To me it seemed astonishingly beautiful. On another occasion I heard the howling of wolves and was struck by the musicality of their 'phrases.' "

While playing the saxophone in a jazz group, Paul had the idea of using every musical means at his disposal to draw people's attention to the depletion of the biosphere. He decided to recreate the sounds of the Earth and enhance their effect thanks to the power of music, jazz, folk or symphonic.

"We had done a great deal," says Paul, "before we managed to set up our own live recording company, Living Music Records, in 1980. Several Eco music albums have already appeared. In the autumn of 1986 we toured the Soviet Union for the first time."

Winter believes that the desire to preserve wildlife is at the same time an assertion of the inadmissibility of a new war. That is why the call for disarmament and the rejection of force in the settlement of conflicts is close to the hearts of those who campaign for the purity of the environment.

"We are all bound to the environment by thousands of threads," says Paul, "though we are not always aware of this, living as we do in such a polluted world. For this reason I rejoice at any concrete step towards the preservation of life on earth."

The trip to Baikal last year marked the beginning of the creative friendship between Paul Winter's group and Dmitry Pokrovsky's folk ensemble.

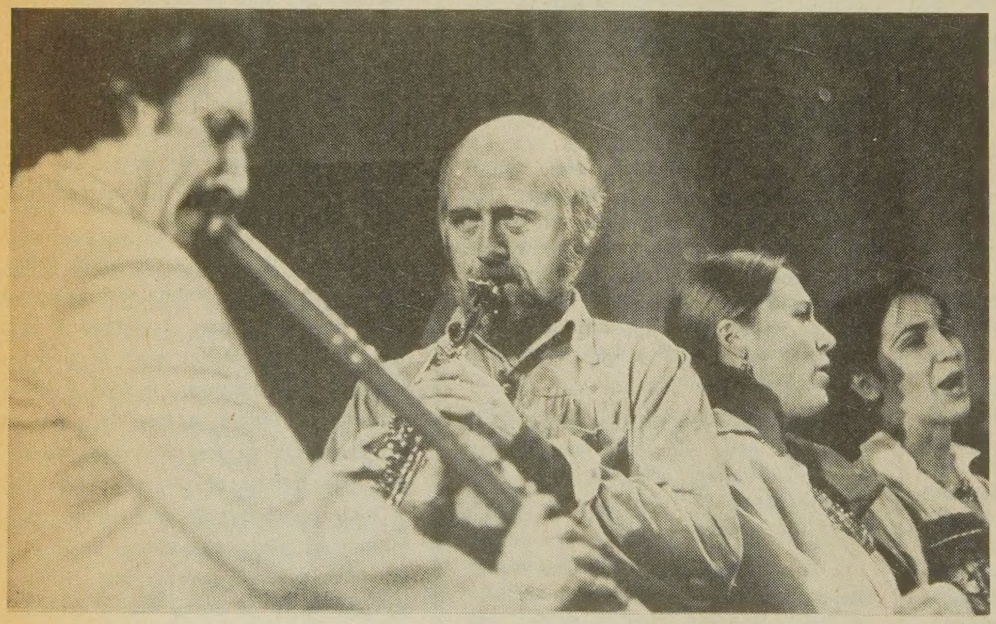
"Folk is also a seriously endangered species," Dmitry Pokrovsky believes. "All its roots bind it to nature. The collaboration between Soviet and American musicians is giving birth to a new hybrid, a new kind of music that will be of interest to listeners in both the U.S.S.R. and the United States."

"We must meet each other half way," Paul Winter continued. "The problem of preserving Lake Baikal is no less important to us in the States than that of preserving American lakes. We no longer have the right to a narrow approach. There is only one world and one environment, and nowadays, as we know, any industrial disaster directly affects the fate of all life on earth. We want our peoples to get to know each other better. With Dmitry, I am doing my share to achieve this, through the medium of music.

Paul came to Moscow only a month after he attended the international forum For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Mankind held here. Recording started at Melodia on two new discs, which feature Pokrovsky and his group performing traditional folk music. This will complete the series of records Paul intended to make after his Soviet tour. They will include not only traditional Russian melodies but also original compositions. Besides this, Paul is preparing to make a film about Lake Baikal, the shooting scheduled for August to coincide with the international meeting, Ambassadors of Nature.

At the American group's concerts in the U.S.S.R. two compositions were particularly warmly received. One was "Baikal Hymn," a broad musical canvas celebrating one of the unique wonders of the world. When the American musicians sang "Live, Baikal, bright Baikal, blessed Baikal" in Russian, the audience burst into thunderous applause. A natural sequel to the hymn was "Chorale for the River Elbe," written in 1985 for the 40th anniversary of the linkup on the Elbe of Soviet and American soldiers, allies in the fight against fascism. It is an example of musical collaboration, for the melody was arranged by Moscow pianist Alexei Zuyev, who succeeded in skilfully blending George Gershwin's "Lullaby" from "Porgy and Bess" and Solovyov-Sedoi's "Moscow Nights."

VLADIMIR BOLOTNIKOV



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PEKING OPERA IN MOSCOW

Scenes from the operas "Romance in a Trunk," "Disgraceful Behaviour of Monk Lu Zhishen in a Mountain Temple," and "Mu Guiing Comes Down from the Mountains to Rout the Enemy."

Some 200 years ago a troupe of actors came to Peking from the province of Anhui. Exactly what they performed—"At the Meeting of Three Roads," "Romance in a Trunk" or some other play from the ancient repertory—is not known. But the delight and amazement with which they were received by the Peking public is recorded in history. Since then, the theatre created after the pattern of the Anhui opera school has come to be known as Jinxi, theatre of the capital, or Peking Opera.

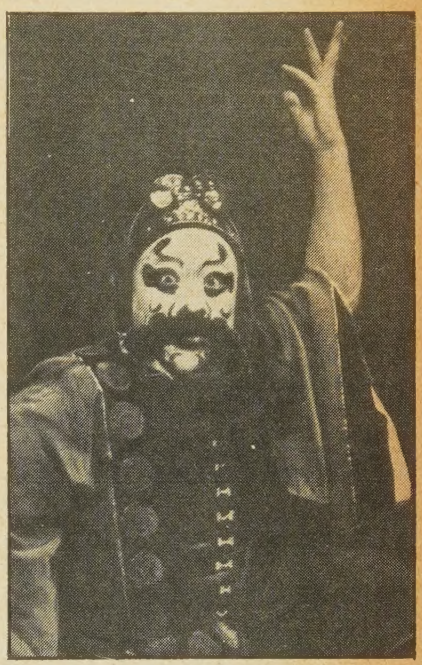
Jinxi does not imply association with the city. It stands for a variety of musical drama that has absorbed all the best of regional opera and oral folklore. Europeans would hardly call it opera. The soft tones of the orchestra, melodies played on the jinghu, the Chinese violin, and—what is altogether uncustomary for us—pantomime, acrobatics and swordplay. The plots consist of glimpses of the life of ancient China preserved in legend, popular belief and historical record.

The place of each actor is clearly defined by costume and makeup: there are the "jing" (male roles), or "the big painted masks," the "dan" (female roles), the "chou" (positive or negative comedy roles (with the "villain" marked by a white spot on the bridge of the nose), and the "shen" (also a male role). Only four types, but what a range of complex characters the actors create! The brave Mu Guiing, who slays her foes, the monk, who is driven out of the temple for misbehaving, the water sprite, who falls in love with an Earth man. And, finally, the leader of the hosts of the water kingdom.

The Jinxi theatre, which came to Peking from the provinces, spread throughout China. Today provincial troupes are fully justified in calling themselves "Peking Opera." A troupe of young Peking opera actors from Liaoning province recently gave performances in Moscow.

Much has changed in the Jinxi in recent times. Today women take part in performances, there are fewer monologues describing the character of the hero and the background of the story enacted on the stage. The language of the narrative is changing, becoming more laconic, restrained and comprehensible for today's audiences. But the traditions and the spirit of ancient Chinese art remain unchanged.

Photos by A. Ratnikov



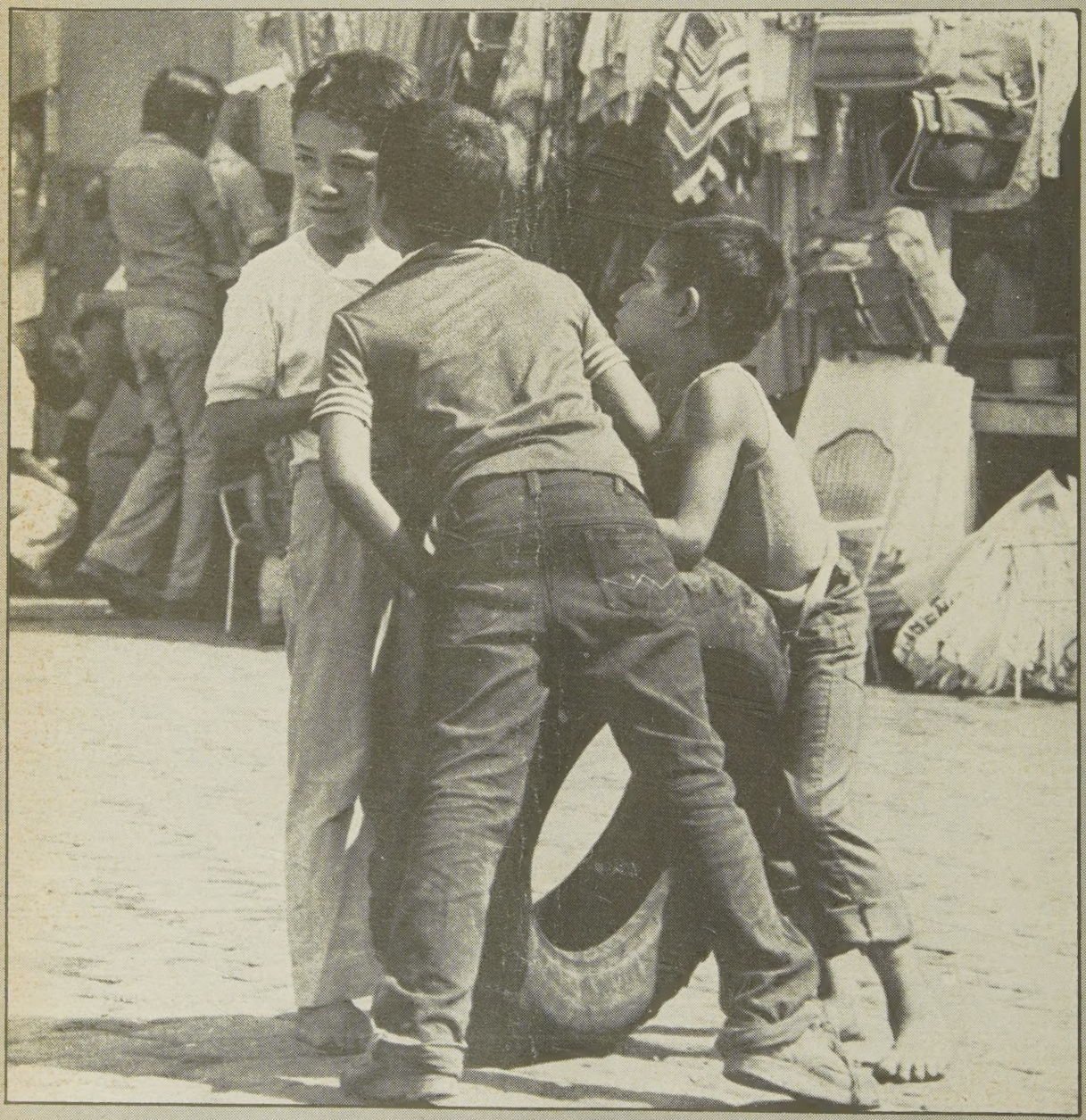
Freedom Fighters.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

Orlando Valenzuela (Nicaragua)

What Are They Up To!



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